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ASIATIC SOCIETY OF THE BRANCH

SKETCHES

ON THE

SHORES OF THE CASPIAN,

DESCRIPTIVE AND PICTORIAL.

88207

BY WILLIAM RICHARD HOLMES.

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PREFACE.

A VERY young Author presents this his first attempt to the ordeal of public opinion, with no small amount of fear lest he should be accused of presumption for offering himself and his production to the world at all. In his own justification, however, he ventures to assign the following reason for so doing. His position in the house of his relative, Mr. James Brant, Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroom, afforded him an opportunity of visiting a country, interesting indeed, and but little trodden. He availed himself of it; and now places before the public the result of his enterprise, in the persuasion that he will meet with that indulgence always so generously awarded in his own happy land to efforts which are designed to convey a more perfect knowledge of countries hitherto but partially explored.

The English works on the Persian provinces on the shores of the Caspian Sea, already published, are, the Author believes, limited to two or three: one by Jonas Hanway, who travelled there in the time of Nadir Shah, early in the last century; another by Fraser, entitled "Adventures on

the Shores of the Caspian," written about twenty years ago, which in truth contains but scanty information,—since which, also, many changes have taken place; and a short paper, by Major Tod, published in the Journal of the Geographical Society.

In committing the following Sketches to the press, the Author claims to himself only one merit, namely, that they were written on the spot of which they profess to give a description, and that they are a faithful account of what passed under his observation.

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SKETCHES

ON THE

SHORES OF THE CASPIAN.

CHAPTER I.

Departure from Tabreez.—Our Party.—Borringe.—Character of the Mountains.—The Adgee Chai.—Khodjeh.—Departure from Khodjeh.—Breakfast.—Position of Villages.—Kuzi Kapan.—The inhabitants.—Ke-khoda.—Vermin.—Buying a Holiday.—Mountains of Karadaugh.—Old Caravanserai.—The Roads.—Ahar.—Mines of Urghurt.—Copper Mines.—Seyeed Khan.—Tomb of Shahaub-u-deen.—Superstition.

On the afternoon of the 4th of November, 1843, we left Tabreez accompanied by our English friends, who, as is customary in Persia, came a short distance with us before taking leave. The weather was lowering, and a little rain fell, which was considered peculiarly lucky by the Persians; for, as it is of such vital importance to agriculture in this dry climate, they have connected with rain a superstitious idea of general good-fortune.

Our party consisted of Mr. A., Her Majesty's Consul at Tehraun, his Meerza (scribe), five servants, and a Gholaum, Mohamed Rahim Beg, who had

been sent by the prince, Bahman Meerza, as our mehmandar, to procure lodgings and provisions, and to see that we were treated with proper attention. We were all armed; but our servants were so loaded with weapons, that in case of an attack they would have proved more an incumbrance than a protection. Their formidable appearance alone would have sufficed to keep a party of double their number at a respectful distance; and we might reasonably congratulate ourselves on the prospect of travelling unmolested, and arriving safe at our journey's end, provided our followers possessed one tithe of the courage and devotion they boasted while quietly riding through the suburbs of the town. The Meerza, however, was essentially a man of peace, and seemed to entertain a profound antipathy to anything warlike; instead of sword and dagger, he carried in his girdle a roll of paper and a calemdaun (Persian inkstand), the peculiar type of the professors of the pen.

Our baggage had preceded us to the village of Borringe, about six miles from Tabreez, accompanied, and supposed to be defended in case of need, by four grooms, the cook, and the muleteers.

The road from Tabreez to Borringe leads in an easterly direction, through gardens and orchards, the high mud-walls of which almost concealed the beauty of the foliage; and the view is generally confined to the limits of a narrow, dusty lane.

On arriving at Borringe we found a small, square chamber prepared for our reception; carpets were spread, and a solitary chair was standing dejectedly

in a corner, making an hospitable effort to give the room rather an European appearance, but seemingly convinced that it was a hopeless failure. However, on the whole, things appeared cheerful, particularly as dinner was immediately forthcoming; which having discussed with due solemnity, we retired to rest, in anticipation of a journey in which something of the pleasant was expected by me, but a great deal of the disagreeable was predicted by my friend.

We left Borringe at half past seven the next morning, and proceeded in a northerly direction towards a steep pass, through hills composed of red sand-stone and granite. On emerging from this pass, we travelled east, through a mountainous country, almost totally uncultivated; the soil being so strongly impregnated with salt that no vegetation exists, save some few plants peculiar to land of that description.

Having ridden about six miles, we passed Gheunbund, a village of apparently twenty houses, situated on the left, at the foot of the hills here bounding the small barren plain through which our road lay.

The rugged crests of some of the surrounding mountains rose in wild confusion, while others of a less severe character presented a beautiful variety of colouring. They principally consisted of sandstone.

Continuing through this scenery in a north-easterly direction, small patches of cultivation being here and there visible, we crossed a rivulet, the water of which, though brackish, was drinkable; and, a mile or two further on, we forded the Adgee,

or Bitter River. At this season it is very shallow, and not more than thirty yards broad: the water is clear and extremely salt. After making many windings, it flows at this point in a north-westerly direction, over a bed of sand and gravel, and, continuing its course through the plain of Tabreez, falls into the lake of Oroomia. In the spring, on the melting of the snows, it is a rapid and considerable river; later in the season, most of its water is exhausted in irrigation; and in the summer its bed near the lake is frequently dry. The water of the stream becomes more and more salt on its approach to the lake, owing to the extensive saline marshes surrounding it.

At half-past eleven A.M. we arrived at our resting-place, the village of Khodjeh, bearing north-east at about sixteen miles from Borringe. With some little noise, a house was cleared for our reception, though the inhabitants seemed reluctant to turn out. Our Gholaum, however, expedited matters very efficiently, by a few cuffs and a torrent of abuse. This, to a person unacquainted with the East, might appear rather too arbitrary a measure, but it is indispensable as the sole means of procuring a lodging; and perhaps often resistance is only made to enhance the value of what is at last conceded. Sometimes it arises from the fear of being compelled to furnish, gratis, everything that may be required; but if, on departure, the inhabitants be well paid, all the harshness that may have been used is forgotten, and they will generally beg you to come to their house, should you ever again hap-

pen to pass their village. The inconvenience they experience is trifling; the furniture, consisting merely of a few carpets, mattresses, coverlets, and some cooking utensils, is removed directly, and, with the inmates, is taken to a neighbour's house. I may further add, that civility and compliance are in this country taken as implying a sense of weakness and inferiority: nothing can be done without bluster; and, the more overbearing one appears, the greater degree of importance is inferred, and consequently the greater attention and respect are shown.

On arriving here, we ordered tea: no one but he who has experienced it, can imagine the luxury of a cup of tea after a hot and fatiguing ride. It soon made its appearance, but, to our astonishment, was so salt that it was scarcely drinkable. Having inquired of one of the servants whether there was no fresh water to be procured in the village, he protested that he had used fresh water, and brought us some cold to taste. I could not detect the least saltness, and the man affirmed that it was from the same water he had made the tea; and on further examination we found that it only became salt when boiled. Our head servant had formerly been here with Sir John Macdonald, and he now remembered that he was obliged to throw away the tea made on that occasion. The people drink no other water, and consider it extremely wholesome. From their healthy appearance I should imagine they were correct.

Khodjeh contains about one hundred houses, and, I was informed, three hundred inhabitants. It is

built on two small hillocks, situated in a plain, the greater part of which is cultivated and appears to be fertile: barley and wheat are produced, and the people pretend that the soil returns twenty-fold. The Adgee flows through the plain and close to the village, which belongs to a daughter of Abbas Meerza, and yields her a revenue of 300 tomauns. The houses are of mud, and are all on the ground-floor: in the interior, the walls have recesses, which answer the purpose of open cupboards; the roofs are flat, formed of cross-beams and dried bushes covered with earth. Khodjeh possesses one large mosque built of sun-dried bricks; it has no minaret, and is a heavy ugly building. Carpets are made here, as in most of the hamlets in this part of Persia.

There are four villages on the plain; Gogherjin, Emitcheh, Armendeh, and Khodjeh: the two former, belonging to some families of the Sheghaughee, a wandering tribe, are left uninhabited when they go to their summer pastures.

At half-past seven in the morning we left Khodjeh, and, at first travelling a short distance in a north-easterly direction, afterwards turned east, and continued our route through numerous small plains, separated by low rocky hills of the same formation and colouring as those already described. At distant intervals patches of cultivation were to be seen, but in general the country presented a dreary and barren appearance. We crossed several times the stream which had yesterday spoiled our tea, and about one o'clock came to the banks of a rivulet, the waters of which were said to be fresh and good, whether

KHODJEH.

Richard Bentley, New Burlington St. 1846.

hot or cold, and dismounted for breakfast. A few dried thistles and some dead grass afforded fuel; and a fire was lighted, eggs boiled, and all the *et cetera* prepared with wonderful celerity. It would be difficult to find a better travelling servant than a Persian: he is active, untiring, and excessively ingenious, never seeming at a loss for anything.

After breakfast we recommenced our march, going east, over some low hills more rounded and not so craggy as those we had hitherto traversed. The weather, though threatening, was cool; and the rain which had fallen during the night having laid the dust, rendered travelling agreeable.

We now crossed another wide barren plain, and entered a more cultivated district, where numerous teams of oxen were busily employed in ploughing.

Until arriving at the village of the Shah-soowar (king's horse-man), about eighteen miles from Khodjeh, not a vestige of a habitation was visible; and it was a matter of no small astonishment from whence the people came who were labouring in the surrounding fields. The villages, however, were concealed among the neighbouring valleys, and had been built as far as possible from the high road, in order to avoid many inconveniences, the chief of which is the necessity of entertaining and lodging travellers and government messengers, most generally without any remuneration.

Shah-soowar, on the right of the road, belongs to Nedjef Kooly Khan, lately governor of Khoi, and most of the land we had traversed during the last hour is cultivated by its inhabitants. Half

a fursuck (two miles) further, we came to the village of Kuzi-Kapan, an insignificant place, containing between thirty and forty houses. It belongs to the Sheik-ul-Islam, at Tabreez, and pays yearly, in money, forty tomauns besides, in kind, one-tenth of its produce, which is considerable. From this part of the country, Tabreez is supplied with wheat and barley; the corn grown in the immediate vicinity of that city not being sufficient for its consumption. Carpets and saddle-bags of carpetting are made at Kuzi-Kapan. The houses are built of mud in the manner already described, and, being of the same colour as the earth on which they stand, look like heaps of rubbish and ruins, and, instead of enlivening, rather increase the dreary and desolate aspect of the surrounding country. There is a small stream supplying the inhabitants with excellent water, and its banks planted with willow-trees form the only refreshing feature of the landscape. I was informed that the people owned about seven hundred head of sheep, and three hundred of oxen and cows: on each ewe a tax of ten shahis (sixpence) is levied, and on each cow a reál of twenty-five shahis (one shilling and threepence). The land usually yields plentiful crops, but they had failed this year on account of the drought.

The men were athletic, and apparently healthy: the women were not very scrupulous about concealing their faces; but the few I saw had better have remained covered—that, at least, would have left room for imagination. The specimens exhibited, however, showed nothing but the most unmitigated

sun-burnt ugliness. Quantities of half-naked children were playing about, and seemed to regard me with peculiar alarm.

From Kuzi-Kapan the Savalaun Mountain bears exactly east: to the north, about two miles off, lies the village of Djighere; and to the south, some seven miles distant, in the plain below that of Zarf, Kuzi-Kapan, being situated between the two on a gentle slope.

All the villages in Persia have their Ket-khoda or Ked-khoda, which literally means the lord or master of the house, and is applied to the head of a village, perhaps because his is generally considered the principal house: he is answerable for the revenues, and is sometimes the collector of them; and is referred to, and acts as judge, in all cases of dispute between the villagers.

When we arrived here, a house was in readiness for our reception, as we had sent forward the Gholaum for that purpose. We found, however, that the room swarmed with fleas; and, as we were then quite strangers to this cheerful little insect, and by no means wished to form an intimate acquaintance with him, owing to certain narrow-minded prejudices which greatly wore off as we gained experience on our travels, we preferred an open shed in front of the house; and, having excluded the wind and weather as much as possible with heavy cloths and carpets, we slept tolerably well, though the rain fell in torrents all night, and the air was rather too cool to be pleasant.

The morning was cloudy, and, though it did not

actually rain, yet appearances were so unfavourable, that we prepared ourselves for a regular drenching during our ride.. While we were at breakfast, a fine healthy-looking boy, about ten years old, brought us a petition for a holiday, written, as he informed us, by the schoolmaster himself. This appeared curious, but the sequel was more so. The boys had asked the Moollah for a holiday. "That's all very well," said he, "but you must pay for it." The boys had got no money, and their countenances fell. The old gentleman, however, immediately relieved them from their embarrassment, by writing the petition, and suggesting, that when presented to the Sahib Inglese, the purchase money might also be solicited. About a shilling was given to the child, and he went away delighted.

We left Kuzi-Kapan at a quarter to nine, and proceeded in a north-easterly direction towards Karadaugh. The word means "black mountain;" and the province has been well named, for nothing can possibly look more black and forbidding than its mountains, chiefly owing to the sombre colouring of the rocks and earth, which in some places have the appearance of cinders; and also to the dark bushes of blackthorn, hawthorn, rose, and juniper, with which their sides are covered.

As we ascended, we became enveloped in a thick fog and drizzly rain, totally obscuring the scenery, which, judging from the steep descents, the narrow deep gullies we traversed, and the bare rocks starting in gigantic masses from the edge of the road, must have been peculiarly wild.

After an hour's descent from the summit of the pass, we got clear of the mist, and half an hour more brought us to an old caravanserai at the foot of the mountains. There was nothing picturesque in this ruin, of which the walls and a few broken-down cells alone remained, occasionally affording shelter to wandering dervishes or other vagabonds. It stands on the right of the road: on the left runs a small rivulet, flowing from a cleft in the hills, and becoming a considerable river as it approaches Ahar.

The roads we had hitherto travelled were generally hard and level. Across the plains, and, indeed, over some of the hills, it would not be difficult to drive a carriage; here they became more stony, and sometimes passed through small patches of marshy ground. We continued our course along a broad and fertile valley, watered by the above-mentioned stream, on the banks of which I observed several water-mills.

After travelling twenty-five miles in continual rain, we forded the river, here about twenty yards broad, and, ascending a slight rise for half a mile, arrived wet and tired at Ahar. The lodgings prepared by our Gholaum proved tolerably comfortable, being the anderoon, or women's apartments, of a house standing alone in a garden. The room we occupied was in the form of a parallelogram, having at one end a large window with a close wooden grating: a tandour and very dirty frame over it occupied the centre; and a swing, in which the cradles of the children are placed, was suspended at the other extremity. The walls were of mud,

furnished, as usual, with two rows of square recesses edged with white plaster; and the whole had very much the appearance of a large brown-paper box relieved with lines of white. The ceiling was composed of twelve cross-beams, supporting a kind of lath-work of split willow-stems placed closely side by side, upon which rested the bushes covered with earth, forming the flat roof.

We dried our wet clothes, and then, finding the weather a little clearer, sallied forth to see the town.

Ahar, the capital of Karadaugh, is situated in a wide vale surrounded by lofty mountains, and is encircled by a decayed mud wall, flanked by numerous round towers. It is the residence of the governor of the province, Mahomed Rahim Meerza, a brother of the Shah by another mother. By far the greater part of the place is in ruins, and one would scarcely suppose it to be the abode of a prince, or a capital town; but the fact is, that, as a governor is seldom or never allowed to remain in one post longer than two years, he has no interest in the welfare of the people he governs, and makes the most of the time to enrich himself at their expense. Thus every wealthy man becomes a mark for extortion; and, consequently, whatever property there may be is carefully concealed, and everything is made to assume the aspect of poverty and wretchedness: even the palace itself, as it is called, is a miserable mud-house, only to be distinguished from the ruins which surround it by a pointed tiled roof. There is a small dirty bazar, but the trade

is limited to the supply of the town and adjacent villages. The city is said to contain 1500 families, 600 of which are taxed; and to yield a revenue of a thousand tomauns per annum. In addition to the cultivation of wheat and barley, the gardens around the town produce apples, pears, plums, cherries, apricots, grapes, and several other fruits.

About twelve miles to the north of Ahar lie the iron mines of Urghurt, formerly worked, under the superintendence of Sir Henry Bethune, on account of the Persian government; but since given up by him, from the difficulty he experienced in obtaining re-payment of the money he had expended. The ore is very rich and abundant; and, though the government is in want of iron, and is obliged to purchase it from Russia, yet these mines are now totally neglected, on account of the false economy which withholds the advance of the money necessary to conduct the enterprise, although the result has been ascertained by experience to be certain. About the same distance further north are situated the copper mines, once conducted by Seyeed Khan. I believe they are still worked, but for want of funds and proper management the enterprise is profitless, and the produce insignificant. This province abounds in very rich veins of metal, iron, tin, and copper, which, under a better government, might become a source of incalculable wealth.

Seyeed Khan was the son of a small Armenian trader at Busheer, and was educated at a public school at Bombay. On his return to Busheer he engaged himself as a servant to Mr. Ellis, and

afterwards to Colonel Monteith; and, being an intelligent man, and speaking English, was subsequently employed by his Royal Highness Abbas Meerza. He was at that time called Sadik Beg, and went to England to open a trade, having a sort of commission from the prince to act as his agent. On his return he brought out a small stock of merchandize, which remunerated him wonderfully; was made a Khan by Abbas Meerza, who likewise invested him with the Order of the Lion and Sun, and sent him back to England under the name of Seyeed Khan, to execute some further commissions for his Royal Highness, as well as to advance the interests of trade.

On his arrival at Constantinople he endeavoured to supersede the Persian consul, assuming the title of ambassador; but the Turkish government, finding that he had no mission from the Shah, refused to acknowledge his pretensions. He, however, went on to England, still with the assumed title and rank of Persian ambassador, living on the credulity and generosity of the authorities of the countries through which he passed, and finally reaching London penniless. By his assumed character, a good and plausible address, and on the strength of a fine beard, and good shawls and clothes, he imposed on many noble and influential persons, and was introduced into the best society. He succeeded in persuading a rich East Indian house of business to engage in commercial speculations under his auspices, and to purchase a ship expressly for the purpose, giving her the name of "The Seyeed Khan;" then, after

investing a large sum in merchandize, incurring a heavy debt to the above-mentioned house, and to many others, he returned to Persia.

The enterprise did not answer the expectations of his friends; the returns were small, and too high-priced to be profitable, chiefly from being obtained on credit. Abbas Meerza, however, still continued to him his favour, and made him a grant of the mines in Karadaugh. Soon afterwards, the death of his Royal Highness blasted the Khan's prospects, and he found he could only retain his position by large presents and bribery at the Court of the Shah. The remainder of his adventure was dissipated by these extraordinary demands, as well as by his own extravagance; and, when he died, he was a debtor to English merchants of some 20,000*l*.

For a time his mines were productive, and he furnished some guns to the Persian government. Its berauts or orders, however, given to assist him in working the mines, and which were to be repaid by guns, were encashed at such a heavy discount, that he only became more deeply involved; and, on dying of cholera at Tehraun in 1842, he left immense debts in Persia. His corpse was buried by night, lest the artillerymen, of whom he had borrowed money at a high interest, should seize it, and, by exposing it, oblige the Christians, through shame, to pay a sum of money for permission to inter it; which money is, in such cases, applied to the discharge of the debt.

Seyeed Khan was a man of a certain kind of cleverness, great plausibility and address, and is not

an uncommon instance of the way in which Persians with similar talents have often succeeded in raising themselves from insignificance. In other characteristics he was a true Persian, vain and ostentatious; and these qualities his Mohamedan countrymen knew how to turn to their own account: they spoiled him of his money through flattery and feigned admiration, and, when he had no longer the means of paying them, they treated him with neglect and contempt. His history forcibly reminds one of the tale of Hadgee Baba; and, were his whole story told, it would probably form a series of as amusing and varied adventures, with the addition of their all having really happened to one individual.

On the right hand on entering Ahar stands a conspicuous ruin, the tomb of a certain Sheik, Shahaub-u-deen (Star of Religion). I made many inquiries, but no one seemed to know at what period the reverend old gentleman flourished. It may, however, probably have been during the fourteenth century, as Tamerlane is reported to have added to the building, erected by the Sheik himself, the two minarets of blue lacquered tiles on each side of the middle and principal arch. I should, however, doubt the truth of the assertion, as Tamerlane was more likely to have destroyed, than to have added to the structure; besides, I should hardly think it so ancient. The façade has a lofty arched recess in the centre; and on either side are wings, having an upper story, attaining to about two-thirds of the present height of the minarets. On the left hand as you face the building is another wing on the ground-floor, con-

taining an apartment now used as a mosque. The whole face of the building was formerly covered with characters and scrolls in lacquered tiles of blue and yellow, of which very few now remain. The minarets are in tolerable preservation, except their summits, which were apparently once crowned with some kind of ornamental roof or spire, but they are now level with the top of the wall of the main building; and at the base of both the pillars, at about four feet from the ground, is a vacant space in the tile-work which possibly may have contained a slab for an inscription. In front of the building is an old tank, built principally of marble; but it is now dry, and half filled up with pieces of masonry which have fallen in from the sides. From the central arched recess one passes through a low door into a lofty square chamber, built of brick and surmounted by a dome of the same material; it is perfectly empty, and is now the abode of sparrow-hawks and wild pigeons, which enter through the holes and crevices in the top. Another door in one corner of this chamber leads into an open area surrounded by a number of small cells, probably once appropriated to visiters, or the apartments of the priests and attendants who formerly kept the place in order. The court is so filled with graves, that the marble slabs covering them have formed a complete pavement. In the centre is a handsome screen or railing of stone of a dark slate colour, beautifully chiselled in open work, surrounding the tomb of the saint. This screen would appear to have been erected in a hurry, or left unfinished, as on one half of the small wicket

which gives access to the tomb the sculpture is incomplete. There are no figures engraved, the carving representing only scrolls of flowers and other fanciful devices." Most of the grave-stones are inscribed with Arabic characters. The lower part of the outside walls of the building is composed of single slabs of stone, some of a reddish purple, and some of a grey tint, reaching four feet from the ground; the remainder is of very excellent brick, and of good workmanship.

We ascended the minarets by a worn and dilapidated spiral staircase, and should have obtained an extensive view of the town and neighbouring mountains, but the weather still continued overcast, and the magnificent Savalaun Dágh was enveloped in clouds to its very base. I should think the shafts of the minarets still standing were not less than a hundred and thirty or a hundred and forty feet high.

The ruin is situated in what was formerly a burying ground, but was converted into an orchard by the present Shah before he came to the throne. At one corner is a large gateway, through which passes a rill of water flowing from the town along the top of an embankment, and planted on either side with a row of luxuriant willows. Over the gateway are some open rooms; the whole in a state of great dilapidation.

In an arched window of the mausoleum we observed a quantity of reeds. We inquired what they were, and were informed, that, if a person suffered from pain or disease, he twined a reed with string or rag, prayed over it, and consigned it to this holy

place, and the people gravely assured us that the malady duly passed away. What peculiar efficacy belonged to the reed or the string nobody pretended to explain, but every one asserted the fact. This superstition resembles the hanging up of rags or offerings on the branches of trees near sacred spots; a custom common both in Turkey and Persia, and many other countries, Ireland and Scotland not excepted.

CHAPTER II.

Departure from Ahar.—Gheun-deughdee.—Kaleh-bashee.—Game. Arrival at Meezaum. — Shah-sevens. — Robbery. — Savalaun Daugh.—Mishkeen.—Arrival at Loree.—Dinner.—Our Cook. —"Tweel."—Dismal Weather.—Leave Loree.—Soomaree.—Ruined Castle. — Bad Quarters. — Vermin. — Departure from Soomaree.—The Shah-seven Tribe.—Their numbers in Mishkeen — In Ardebeel. — Arrive at Ardebeel. — Uninhabitable Lodgings.—Removal to better. — The Vekeel.—Letters from England.

On the 8th November we resumed our journey. The morning was overcast and chilly, but no rain fell. At nine o'clock we left Ahar, keeping generally in an easterly direction along the valley on the left bank of the river, which we crossed after about an hour's travelling; and, continuing for some distance on the right bank, passed the village of Teveleh (stable), and, a little further, that of Tazehkend (new village), both on the opposite side of the stream. Between these two villages we fell in with an encampment of about six tents of the Sheghaughee tribe. Half a mile further on we passed through the village of Shah-verdee-kishlaughee (Shah-given winter residence), built on a small eminence, one side of which forms a precipice overhanging the river. These villages are not large;

Tazehkend, the most considerable, consisting of about fifty houses.

Soon after quitting Shah-verdee-kishlaughee we again crossed over to the left bank. At this point the valley became narrower, varying from one to three hundred yards; and the hills, which had hitherto presented smooth and rounded summits, now exhibited a more rugged outline. The road wound round their sides, which sometimes, nearly meeting at the base, left only a narrow chasm for the stream, here so confined as to become a foaming torrent.

Prettily situated among a few trees in a cleft of the mountain on the right bank, is the village of Gheun-deughdee, consisting of about twenty houses. Alum is found in this neighbourhood. A short distance further, on the same side of the river, is the village of Kaleh-bashee (head castle), standing on the edge of a lofty precipice, on which are to be seen the embattled walls of an old fortress. Over the stream below there has formerly been a bridge of two arches, but nothing now remains save the foundations, across which a few trunks of trees have been placed for the convenience of foot-passengers.

Here we once more forded the stream, and after travelling a few miles further along its right bank quitted it altogether, ascending a hill covered with dwarf oak, birch, a kind of prickly shrub something resembling the acacia, and occasionally clumps of the wild fig-tree. The climate had become sensibly warmer; and near the ruined bridge before mentioned I perceived, for the first time, a little rice cultivation.

The bushes on the mountain were full of blackbirds and thrushes; and the change from the dreary barren country through which we had passed, where nothing like a bush was visible, was exceedingly refreshing. We continued over these hills on a beautiful smooth turf for about two miles, when we happened to start a hare close to the road-side. Being well mounted, and having a couple of greyhounds with us, we gave chase, when to our surprise we found that almost every bush contained a hare; they started out in all directions, and, dodging among the brushwood, completely puzzled the dogs, who could not keep the same animal in view for two seconds.

After a great deal of hallooing and scampering about to no purpose—every one calling the dogs to the particular hare he had just started, and they attending to no one, but enjoying a little hunting for their own individual amusement—we thought our fire-arms were likely to do more execution, and therefore dismounted; several of our attendants who had guns following the example.

I had not proceeded many yards before I put up a hare, which I shot, and the report of my gun raised an immense covey of partridges. Meanwhile a very brisk fire commenced on all sides, and even pistols were discharged at the astonished animals.

The scene was very animating; and the servants, hallooing and rushing hither and thither, seemed to have gone mad. I found the Gholaum in a thicket literally filled with hares, blazing away at them sitting, without the least effect on his part, and with as

little apparent fear on theirs. This man was a great sportsman in a small way; and on the road if the report of a gun was heard, it was sure to be Mohamed Rahim Beg shooting at a crow. The Meerza, with his mouth wide open in amazement at the uproar, seemed to think it just possible that an odd shot might come his way; and to add to his comfort, being no sportsman, he was left in charge of about seven horses, which occasionally exhibited symptoms of pugnacity, and nearly pulled his arms off.

Unfortunately we had some distance to go, and it was getting late; so, in about a quarter of an hour we mounted, and hastened to the village of Meezaum, where we had determined to put up for the night. The abundance of hares was quite inconceivable, and we likewise raised some immense coveys of partridges; these, however, were very wild. Notwithstanding the abundance of hares, we only bagged four, for the bushes were too close to give us a fair chance, and we were distracted by the numbers: our attendants shot nothing.

The day had been cloudy, and threatening rain; the evening was cold and foggy, and the sun had long set ere we reached Meezaum. The inhabitants vacated for us a most filthy hut, the best, however, the place afforded; and we endeavoured to make ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit. During the operation of removing the furniture we were sitting outside, surrounded by the people of the place, staring at us open-mouthed. I had ample time to observe their physiogno-

mies, and I think I never before beheld such unparalleled ugliness; some of them were hardly human—one man's forehead being about an inch high, and his chin three or four inches long; there were noses of every shape imaginable, and no one had two eyes looking the same way. Two or three old women were peering over a wall, and their hideous and wrinkled features were perfectly astonishing.

This village is about twenty-two miles distant from Ahar: it is mostly in ruins, and appears a miserable place. We passed a sleepless night, but felt thankful that we were not entirely devoured by the vermin with which our room swarmed.

On the 9th we left Meezaum, at about a quarter to nine, in a thick fog, and proceeded in an easterly direction, over the same smooth undulating country as the day previous. We soon started a hare, which, however, threw out the dogs after a long chase: these animals were still in immense quantities, but we could not afford time to stop.

Continuing onwards, we came to the village of Yeyjah; about a mile further, to Auteshghir; and successively to Mazreh-jehan, Munjuckee, Habashee, Kassabah, and Meer-kendee. The soil over which we had travelled appeared rich, and was extensively cultivated with rice, barley, and wheat; numberless villages were scattered about on every side, but those above mentioned lie close to the road. We passed several encampments of the Shah-seven tribe, surrounded with large herds of cattle grazing. The villagers are obliged to be constantly on their guard against these people: only a few nights be-

fore our arrival at Meezaum, the stable we occupied had been broken into by a party, with the intention of carrying off the horses; but not being able to make the hole, which was in one of the back-walls, large enough, they decamped, not, however, without taking some other property.

After having waited about a quarter of an hour at Meer-kendee for a guide, we crossed an undulating plain, the Savalaun Daugh being close on our right. The weather, which was dark and lowering, cleared a little, and gave us a momentary peep at the snow-clad summit of this magnificent mountain, but the mist rolling on immediately covered it again to its very base. The country here became stony and apparently barren, but the whole plain was thickly studded with villages. Close to the road were Khorramoo, Baughtuppeh, Deear, Nestarabad, Bazil, Looeran, and Bijeh; the two latter belonging to the Shah-seven tribe. All these are small: I should think the largest could not boast of more than a hundred houses, and the generality from twenty to thirty. The district of Mishkeen, through which we were now passing, is one of the most populous in Persia, and is famous for the excellent rice it produces. We crossed many rivulets, all flowing in a north-westerly direction, and several dry beds of torrents, which, to judge from their appearance, must be large in the spring. From Bijeh we made a gradual ascent over a tract of rough, stony desert for about six miles, till we reached the village of Loree, distant thirty-two miles from Meezaum. Loree stands embayed be-

tween two points of the high-land, which here abruptly descends many hundred feet into an extensive plain, covered with gardens and villages.

As our luggage had taken a different road, we were rather anxious about it, lest it should miss the place; in the course of an hour, however, it came in, and, our beds being spread, we threw ourselves down and waited for dinner. Dinner!—ah! what a tranquillizing effect on the spirits of a hungry and tired man has the rattling of knives and forks!—he has hitherto grumbled at his quarters—this disgusts by its dilapidated condition, and that promises nothing but discomfort—he feels convinced he shall pass a sleepless night, because he has a suspicion of vermin: —but he no sooner hears the clank of the dishes than his brow relaxes, his voice becomes more soft, his eye more benignant—things begin to wear a different aspect—the place appears more comfortable than he at first supposed it, and, finally, all recollection of other miseries is absorbed in the fumes of roast fowl. It is always roast fowl when travelling in Persia, and excellent birds they are both in size and flavour; though, after eating them incessantly for three months, one begins to undervalue these qualities.

While on this subject, I may say a few words in admiration of our cook, Ismael. He is a tall man, with a droll expression of countenance, and a great wit in his own way, always in a good temper, and very useful and active on the road in getting the muleteers forward. But his chief talent consists in making a dinner out of nothing, metaphorically

speaking—literally out of two or three live fowls. On arriving at our halting-places, he straightway lights a fire, pronounces the proper prayer, and cuts the fowls' throats in the direction of Mecca, that their souls may go direct to Paradise, and in less than two hours produces some four or five different dishes, having for their foundation these said birds. There are, however, a great many assistants in the inscrutable pockets of his wide trowsers, such as curry-powder, spices, dried plums, and many other similar dainties which the Persians mix with their dishes. No one but a Persian could manage as he does; sometimes on the road, when one would be at a loss to conceive how a fire could be kindled, he will prepare tea in marvellously quick time; and never, in the most miserable places, has he failed to give us a good dinner, and always with some variation.

Loree and two or three other villages in its vicinity are held in "tweel" by a Manuchar Khan, who resides at Tabreez. It is customary in Persia to give a government *employé* one or more villages, out of the revenue of which he takes his salary; this is called holding it in "tweel." Loree pays annually seven hundred tomauns. It is said to contain five hundred houses, and is a Kassabah, which means a place with a bazar, not of sufficient importance to be called a town, but yet superior to a village.

On the morning of the 10th, as usual, a drizzly rain fell; and the masses of heavy black clouds, sweeping along the plain and enveloping the surrounding hills, promised a most disagreeable ride:

in fact, since leaving Tabreez we had literally not seen the sun, the same dismal weather continuing day after day.

We left Loree at half-past nine o'clock, and passing through its gardens descended into the plain, and struck across a stony country in an easterly direction, till we had passed the village of Meerali, a little to the left of the road, and, a mile further on, that of Ergheh; hence we went more northerly over a better cultivated tract, and ascended a spur of the Savalaun. It was exceedingly steep and rocky, and, to add to the misery of both horses and riders, the rain began to descend in torrents. For two hours the road lay over these hills, it then became more passable, and turning off a little to the right we entered the village of Soomaree. The time was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and we had been six hours and a half riding a distance of twenty miles, on account of the difficulty of the road. During the course of the day we had met with many Shah-sevens migrating to their winter quarters, and also many of their tents still pitched.

Soomaree is a small village situated on the top of a hill. It was once flourishing, until about seven years ago, when it was visited by plague, which destroyed nearly all the inhabitants. It pays a revenue of two hundred tomauns to government. Pears, apples, grapes, and melons are produced in the gardens; and carpets are manufactured here, as in nearly all the villages through which we had passed. We saw one of a pretty pattern and good quality, measuring eighteen feet by three feet nine

inches, for which only three tomauns (thirty shillings) were demanded.

On an eminence above the village stand the ruins of an old castle, which had not been inhabited within the recollection of the natives, who were also ignorant of its history. The houses here are built as usual of mud, but the foundations appeared to be partly of stone.

On arriving, wet and cold, we were shown into a most wretched hovel: the roof was pierced with holes, and the rain trickled through in every direction, rendering it quite uninhabitable. The people, however, solemnly assured us that all the houses were in the same condition. This was consolatory, inasmuch as we were no worse off than others; but, as it by no means improved our situation, we sent our Gholaum to find a more habitable dwelling if possible. In about half an hour he returned with the joyful intelligence that he had at last secured a good house, and thither we removed. Though very small, it was at least water-tight, of which advantage hardly another house in the village could boast. Here, then, we established ourselves, and having with some difficulty procured wood for a fire, we dried our clothes, and after a comfortable dinner hoped to forget the discomforts of the day in the visions of the night: but no—after all the complicated miseries of wind, water, and cold,—after all the fatigues of rocky passes, and a long day's journey, we were subjected to a most awful infliction of fleas. We suffered in patience for a long time, but there is a point beyond which no patience will

extend; so, lighting candles again, we commenced an attack on the invaders with an ability and enthusiasm only to be acquired by long practice and a thirst for vengeance; but, though thousands fell, thousands still came on with unabated vigour, and my friend declared he could see them charging in heavy squadrons over the carpet. This alarming discovery put an end to the battle; we fairly gave in, and, I need scarcely add, did not close our eyes during the remainder of the night.

The first person I saw in the morning on going out of the house was our Meerza, looking the picture of misery. He shook his head mournfully and exclaimed, "Ah, Sahib! Sahib! this menzil is very bad, it has many fleas; I have not slept." I could not forbear a smile at his woe-begone expression of countenance, and felt a kind of selfish consolation that we had not suffered alone. The quantity of vermin, however, must have been very unusual to have caused him any uneasiness.

We left Soomaree at a quarter to ten in a heavy snow-storm, which soon turned to mist and rain; and, passing over some low hills, entered the plain of Ardebeel. I could see very little of the surrounding country, but it appeared well cultivated; and here and there, through the fog and rain, peeped forth a village. We passed many tents belonging to the Shah-sevens; and I may here take the opportunity of saying a few words regarding this powerful tribe, as it is the last time I shall have occasion to mention them.

Their name is of Turkish derivation, from

"shah" a king, and "sevmek," to love, implying devotion to their sovereign. Their families form, during the summer, the majority of the inhabitants of Mishkeen and Ardebeel. They are Eeliauts (wanderers) and dwell in tents, which are constructed in the following manner. *Some ten or fifteen long curved poles are planted in the ground in a wide circle, their superior extremities fitting into as many holes in a circular hoop, the diameter of which may be about two and a-half feet; thus forming the frame of a dome with an opening in the centre. The lower part of the frame, to a height of about four feet from the ground, is hung round with reeds, tied together with string; and over the whole are laid heavy nummuds or felts, making a very warm and comfortable, though rather a limited dwelling. The opening at the top serves to let out the smoke, and can be closed at pleasure to exclude the rain, or keep in the warmth when the fire is burnt to ashes; at night, when shut, the tent is quite impervious to cold. These people do not cultivate the soil, but own large droves of cattle and numerous flocks of sheep, in which the wealth of the tribe consists. The men are stout, healthy-looking fellows, and the women, when young, are sometimes pretty; but their beauty is evanescent, for they soon become shrivelled, and of a reddish brick-dust colour. They possess the usual thievish propensities of the wandering tribes. In winter, just at the present season, they retire to their Kishlauks (winter quarters) on the plains of Mogaun, and remain there until the warm weather brings forth those

deadly serpents, which in days of yore stopped the march of Pompey's army, and which still render these plains uninhabitable during the hot season.

In Mishkeen there are about seven thousand families of the Shah-sevens, subdivided into nine or ten clans: the revenue paid by this division amounts to 4,000 tomauns, which, with as much more as can be extracted by artifice or force, is collected by their chiefs, Mohamed Khan and his cousin Cossim Khan. Only the above-mentioned sum, however, is claimed by government; any surplus being kept by the chiefs. In this district the tribe does not possess more than two or three villages.

In Ardebeel there are about five thousand families, divided into nine or ten clans, many of which have smaller subdivisions. In this province they hold several villages, which they sublet at a profit to the peasantry of the country. The revenue paid by the tribe to the Shah for these villages, and which is called Djedeed, amounts to...Tns. 1,000
and that derived from a fixed tax on each tent to 2,500

Tomauns 3,500

so that the Shah-sevens in Mishkeen and Ardebeel pay in taxes a total of about 7,500 tomauns.

During the course of our ride to-day, I stopped to examine one of the tents I have already described. Some women who were inside saw my curiosity, and laughing showed me the interior, asking if I thought

it "yakshee" (good). The furniture was composed of various boxes, bags, and carpets. Several half-naked little urchins were playing around the fire, which was of wood and dried cow-dung, and burnt in a small hole in the centre of the tent, the smoke ascending through the aperture in the roof.

After a short but unpleasant ride of twelve miles, we entered Ardebeel. Almost wet through, we made the best of our way along the dirty streets to the lodgings, which we hoped to have found prepared by the Gholaum, who had preceded us by some hours; but were highly disgusted on being shown into a place which had neither window-frames nor doors, was in a more than half-ruinous condition, and in the present state of the weather positively uninhabitable. We exclaimed loudly against this treatment, having sent forward letters of recommendation from Bahman Meerza to the Governor, Meer Khaushim Khan, whom, however, on inquiry we found to be absent; but were informed that his Vekeel, or representative, was a Meerza Aboonoollah. To him, therefore, a message was sent, saying, that if better accommodations were not immediately procured, we should quit the town and write to the Shahzadeh (King's son), informing him of the nature of our reception. This produced an ugly, hard-featured man, dressed as if returned from a ride: he said he had been out eight miles to meet us, but had taken a different road; that the Vekeel was sorry we had not given him a longer notice, as things would then have been better arranged; that he would endeavour to find us a more habitable lodging, but, by our heads, he, the

ugly man, did not suppose that out of fifty houses in Ardebeel one was to be found better than that in which we stood. This was a place where nobody lived, called a Maimoon Khoneh (guest-house), and appropriated to any traveller whatever who might happen to want a night's lodging. The hard-featured man then departed, and for the space of half an hour afterwards we paced the room in our wet clothes, becoming more and more irritated as the time lengthened. At the expiration of this period there was a stir outside, and a little fat jolly-looking man in a violent perspiration waddled in. This was the Vekeel's Vekeel:—he paid us a variety of compliments on the part of his superior—turned up his nose in disgust at the place—stuck his cap on one side, and, Inshallah (please God) hoped that something more fit for gentlemen might be found—this was not fit for our dogs: he had "pulled much shame," and, although he could not say how, he felt convinced all was a mistake; and finally requested that one of our servants might be sent to ascertain if the house he had now provided was a suitable one. A man was despatched, who returned shortly afterwards, reporting that it was "chok yakshee" (very good); and thither we adjourned.

On our arrival all was confusion and noise, loud above which were to be heard the shrill vociferations of the female part of the inhabitants in all the excitement of removal. We were conducted up a steep and ill-constructed staircase,—no worse, however, than those generally met with in Persian houses,—to a small, white-plastered room, twelve feet

by eight, and about nine feet high, having a stained glass window at one end, and a small fire-place.

Our carpets being spread and a fire lighted, we took off some of our wet clothes, and let the remainder dry on us; then, ordering tea, requested the little fat man to be seated, and entered into a lively conversation, which was cut short by the arrival of the Vekeel, Meerza Aboonoollah. He was a handsome-looking man, about forty years of age, very polite, and made many apologies for the trouble and inconvenience we had experienced; he said, that he had not been properly informed who we were, and that our man seemed perfectly satisfied with the place originally appointed; and, indeed, it appeared to have been chiefly the fault of our most stupid Gholaum, who nearly always failed to procure us a decent lodging. After the usual routine of kaleoons (water pipe) and tea, he departed, and we were left to ourselves to make our arrangements.

Half an hour afterwards a foot messenger presented himself, with letters from England and our friends at Erzeroom and Tabreez, which afforded us ample amusement during the remainder of the evening.

CHAPTER III.

Visit to the Vekeel.—Tombs of the Sheik Suffee-u-deen and Shah Ismael.—The Fortress.—Turkish and Persian Manners.—Prisoners in the Fort.—Legend.—Description of Ardebeel.—Departure.—Pintailed Grouse.—Arrive at Nemeen.—A Princess.—Description of Nemeen.—Departure.—Shinghian Kaleh.—Descend the Mountains.—Tent-dwelling Tribes.—Bad Road.—Scenery.—Kishveh.—Night-fall.—Reach Astara.

On Monday, the 13th of November, the weather having cleared considerably, and promising a fine day, we went after breakfast to pay a visit to Meerza Aboonoollah. He received us very civilly in his divan-khoneh, or hall of audience, and, supposing that we were not accustomed to the Persian manner of sitting, had had the politeness to order chairs to be placed for us. The apartment was in the form of a parallelogram, one of the long sides of which was occupied by a large latticed window of stained glass, which could be thrown open at pleasure. The walls were of plain white plaster, without decoration; and the floor was covered with matting, over which were placed some coarse carpets.

After a little general conversation we took leave, and proceeded to visit the tombs of the Sheik Suffee-u-deen, and of his descendant Shah Ismael, the founder of the Suffavean dynasty.

We entered a long narrow court, by a ruined gateway, once covered with beautiful lacquered tiles, some of which remained in patches on the wall, still retaining their brilliant colouring. Passing through this court, we entered a smaller one, having on each side, in three deep recesses, the tombs of some ancient worthies, whose names died with them, or, at all events, are lost to the present generation. These recesses had also been decorated in the same manner as the gateway. Thence we proceeded into another court-yard, in the shape of a parallelogram, lying at right angles to the two already described. This was filled with graves; among which, conspicuous by a white marble slab, was pointed out to us that of Shah Ismael's wife.

On the left-hand side of this court is a door leading into a large, circular brick building, once perhaps a mosque, the walls alone of which are now standing, the roof having probably fallen in. To the right of the court is a dead wall, exhibiting remains of the same lacquered tile-work before mentioned; and opposite is the anti-chamber to the principal tombs, entered by a door in the left-hand corner. It is a long lofty apartment, and has once been beautifully ornamented: from the ceiling hang a quantity of small lamps, said to be either of gold or silver, but so covered with cobwebs and dust that it is impossible to distinguish anything more than the mere shape.

On the floor were the faded remains of what was once a very splendid carpet, the manufacture of which very much surpassed that of the present day.

At one extremity was woven the date of its make, some three hundred years ago.

In the right-hand wall are four or five windows, having small panes of glass set in metal frames, but all so dusty and dirty that little light finds its way through them.

Along the centre of the apartment on the floor were several old candlesticks with branches, and here and there wooden stools, on which lay copies of the Koran.

To the left is a door leading into a large domed chamber, containing the china which belonged to Shah Ismael, or, as some said, to the Sheik, consisting principally of large dishes, vases, drinking-cups, and flagons, spread out on the floor; the numerous recesses in the walls, originally intended for their reception, being left empty. The walls and niches were beautifully gilt and painted. In this apartment a coffin was deposited, waiting until a conveyance offered for Kerbela; as it was believed that the superior sanctity of the place would greatly facilitate the passage of the departed spirit on its way to Paradise.

Leaving this chamber, we proceeded to the tomb of the Sheik, situated at the end of the anti-chamber, and separated from it by two rows of railings, about eight feet and a-half high, and six yards apart, the one of silver, and the other of gold.

The tomb is a small, but lofty circular chamber; lined with old and faded velvets, and surmounted by a dome, from which depend several lamps of gold and silver. In the centre of the apartment repose

the remains of the Sheik, enclosed in a case of dark-coloured wood, having at each corner a large gold knob, roughly set with rubies, emeralds, and other stones. The whole was carefully covered with several cloths, overlaid with a coating of dust, which appeared the accumulation of a century.

On the top of the case were some dilapidated representations of flowers and fruits, but it was not until this had been explained to us that we were at all conscious of their being so intended; and moreover, the room, only lighted by a small and excessively dirty window, was so obscure that objects could with difficulty be distinguished. On one side of the Sheik's remains was the coffin of Sultan Hyder, fifth in descent from him, and the father of Shah Ismael; and, on the other, those of two more of his family.

Returning from this tomb, on the right, between the gold and silver railings, we entered another small domed sepulchral chamber, adorned with lacquered tiles, and much better lighted than that just described. It contains the remains of Shah Ismael, enclosed in a large wooden case, said to have been brought from India; the workmanship of which was perfectly beautiful, being elaborately inlaid with gold, ivory, and various enamels, and carved all over in the most minute manner. In the wall was a square slab of some black substance, exhibiting an absurd print of a hand about four times the size of an ordinary one, but which the natives firmly believe to be the impression of Shah Ismael's.

We wished very much to have seen the library,

but the keeper of the key was not to be found. About one hundred and sixty books were taken away by the Russians in 1828; all they found in the mausoleum; but there were others in the possession of various inhabitants of Ardebeel, which thus escaped the hands of the plunderers, and have since been restored to the library. The Emperor is said to have sent eight hundred ducats to assist in repairing the shrine, as an indemnification for the pillage.

The exterior presents three or four domes, but is neither striking nor picturesque.

A strange feeling of awe creeps over one on visiting these silent chambers of the dead: the dim light, the faded decorations, and the air of a departed grandeur, awaken melancholy and serious reflections; and the unbroken stillness of the place, the dust and cobwebs, give the idea that one is profanely intruding on a hallowed spot, where the sound of man's voice, and the echo of his footsteps, have ceased to be heard for ages.

We next went to visit the fortress, a small place about an hundred and eighty yards square, built of mud, with ditch, drawbridge, and glacis, in the European style, under the superintendence of British officers in the service of Abbas Meerza. It is at present garrisoned by fifty artillerymen; and there are eight guns,—two 3lb, one 9lb, two mortars and three howitzers: they are not, however, mounted on the walls.

We paid a visit to Meerza Mustafa, the ex-Governor of Ardebeel, who resides in the fort; and

found him seated in a small apartment, surrounded with papers and apparently very busy. He is a tall, good-looking man, and received us with much politeness. Since my arrival in this country, the difference in the manners of the Turk and Persian has repeatedly struck me. Almost every Persian is a perfect gentleman, has an agreeable and engaging address, and possesses the art of making one feel quite at ease. The Turk generally appears engrossed in himself and his pipe, and altogether wants that liveliness and affability for which the Persian is eminently distinguished. I must not, however, be supposed to infer that the rule is not without many exceptions on both sides. On leaving Meerza Mustafa, we were joined by the Topchee Bashee (commandant of artillery), who conducted us to the Top Khoneh (arsenal), and showed us the eight guns already mentioned. On the right of the door inside were five miserable Jellallee Koords chained together by the neck; these poor wretches had been there some two years or more, and were in a most emaciated and filthy condition. We learned that they had not been taken in the actual commission of any crime, but had been seized on suspicion on the frontier. As we entered, one of them, an old man with a long grey beard and sunken eyes, began to address us, but was immediately cut short by a most significant look from the old Topchee Bashee.

It rained hard during the night, but the morning turned out fine, and we prepared to resume our journey.

A tradition exists that this part of the country

was formerly a lake, and that Solomon commanded two deeves or genii, named Ard and Beel, to turn off the water into the Caspian, which they effected by cutting a passage through the mountains; and a city, erected in the newly formed plain, was named after them Ard-u-beel.

In outward appearance it differs in no respects from most of the large villages of Upper Persia. I expected to see a superior place, as it is denominated a city, and is the capital of a province. It contains about three thousand houses, built in the usual way, of mud, or mud bricks, with flat roofs. The bazars are neither extensive, nor anyway striking in their appearance, and I only observed one good caravanserai; there may be more, but the shortness of our stay prevented my seeing much of the town. There are no buildings of any interest, except the tombs and the fortress already alluded to. On the south-east side of the town, however, on a small mound is a ruin, which our guide told us was formerly the principal mosque of the place; but we had no time to inspect it, and were not aware of its existence until we saw it as we left Ardebeel.

The revenue of the town formerly amounted to Tmns. 14,000 per annum; but the Shah has lately remitted Tmns. 3000, and at present it is as follows:—

Taxes on cattle . .	Tmns.	4000
„ on shops and trade . .		4000
„ from the customs . .		3000
	Tmns.	11,000*

* About 5,500*l.* sterling.

The trade of Ardebeel is principally with Russia, through the port of Astara.

The imports from thence consist chiefly of iron, steel, paper, and earthenware; and hardware, usually packed in painted boxes, which likewise form an article of trade.

The imports from the interior of Persia are mostly in transit for Russia, and amount, during the year, to about 3000 horse-loads of galls, dried fruits, Persian manufactures, and some native cotton twist from Hamadan.

Almost all goods from Russia come by way of Astara, and we were here informed that the duty was paid, and most of the accounts kept there; but subsequently, on arriving at Astara, we were told that this was not the case, and that every thing was settled at Ardebeel: so difficult is it to obtain correct information. Since the communication by way of Astara has been established, the amount of imports through Enzellee has considerably diminished.

The population of the province of Ardebeel is said now to be classed as follows:—

3000	of the	town
1000	„	villages
5000	„	Shah-sevens
9000	families.	

The plain of Ardebeel is situated high, and the fruits common to the warmer parts of Persia are not produced here; although apples, pears, and cherries are in abundance. The climate is cold and

healthy. The Savalaun Daugh bears north-west of the town, and is a magnificent mountain.

We left Ardebeel at ten o'clock, and immediately outside the town, crossing the small river Balooklee (fishy), took a north-easterly direction across the plain. Many villages are scattered about, among which Erghoer, Boglaun, Kerlaun, Kourtabad, Augboulaugh, and Zeeranah lay nearest the road. During the first hour's march, as far as the village of Augboulaugh, the plain was well cultivated; on the other side it appeared more sandy and barren, but numerous flocks of sheep and cattle were grazing on the scanty herbage. Four miles further we forded the Karasoo, which divides Ardebeel from Taulish. It was rather swollen by the late rains, but the depth was not more than three and a-half feet in the middle, and the width about sixteen yards. Here we saw several large flocks of the pin-tailed grouse, and, dismounting, we shot three or four of them; they are very beautiful birds, and common to most of the plains of Upper Persia. We then passed the villages of Dghighere, Kendee, and Soulaugh; and, turning north over a low hill, approached Nemeen, and were met at a short distance from it by a party of the inhabitants, who led the way to the lodgings which had been assigned us. This village is about eleven miles distant from Ardebeel; it belongs to Meer Caussim Khan, a Taulish chief, and is the residence of his wife, a Princess, sister to Mahomed Rahim Meerza, Governor of Karadaugh. She was very polite to us, insisted on making us her guests, and would not

allow us to pay for anything, sending us tea on our arrival, and a very good dinner in the evening. We subsequently heard several stories of this lady; and, among others, that on her marriage she treated her husband with great hauteur, and kept him at a respectful distance for eight days. The first evening she sent for him, and, making him stand near the door, the following conversation ensued: "You are welcome, Meer Caussim Khan; how is your health, is your brain fat?"

"By the condescension of the Shahzadeh it is fat; how is her health?"

"Good, thank God! you are dismissed."

The second and third evenings were repetitions of the first; on the fourth she requested him to come a little nearer, that she might see what manner of man he was, and, having expressed some slight satisfaction, again dismissed him. The next two days she treated him with still more condescension, and then their wedded life fairly commenced. Persian women think, that, the longer they refuse to receive their lords, the greater the consideration they are entitled to; and, among the higher ranks, their freaks are sometimes carried to a most extraordinary length.

Nemeen is a very pretty village, situated in a small valley at the foot of the mountains which divide the upper country from the lowlands of Taulish. The houses are in good repair and neatly built; and a clear stream, the banks of which are planted with willows, poplars, and some fruit-trees, flows past the eastern side. This village contains

about two hundred houses, and yields an hundred and fifty tomauns' revenue. There are besides several others in the vicinity belonging to Meer Caussim Khan, from which, altogether, he obtains about one thousand tomauns.

Our lodgings were in a small apartment of the palace, as it was called, and proved very comfortable, except that, as usual, we were annoyed by vermin.

The following morning, after having breakfasted on various dishes sent by our hostess, we mounted our horses and departed, regretting that we had no means of showing our sense of the kindness with which we had been received, not having expected to be entertained by Princesses in small out-of-the-way villages.

Our road lay in an easterly direction across some fine grassy hills, and we were accompanied by a very gay party of horsemen, who were exhibiting their prowess, scampering about in every direction; and a lovely morning and bright sun added considerably to the cheerfulness of the scene. Among the hills we saw several large bustards.

After travelling about two miles, we dismissed our escort, and entered the forest; which, although the leaves had fallen, and icicles hung from the branches, was a very agreeable change from the dreary plains we had quitted, where not a bush broke the monotony of the scene. The trees were principally stunted oak, hawthorn, wild apple, and beech.

Two miles of ascent by a narrow muddy path

brought us to the summit of the mountains, from whence a beautiful and new scene presented itself. On the left, before us, rose a steep hill covered with dense forest to within an hundred feet of the top, which terminated in a flat mass of grey rock, called Shinghian Kaleh. As the name implies, a castle formerly crowned the height, and a more appropriate situation for the stronghold of an highland chief could not be conceived. Nothing now remains but a few heaps of stones, and a part of one or two walls, but none of the ruins were visible from where we stood. On either side, as far as the eye could reach, lay ranges of mountains clothed in forest, and terminating in rugged snow-capped peaks, their bases being lost in masses of white clouds, which totally concealed the view of the Caspian and the lowlands.

From this point we began a steep descent, along a track in some places nearly obliterated by the quantity of fallen leaves, and in others formed of ridges, between which were pools of mud and water, made by the continual even tread of baggage-cattle following each other in long strings. It was very painful to our horses, which were continually stumbling and slipping, and straining themselves by violent efforts to recover their footing. We continued on a similar track for many miles, and had left our baggage far in the rear, as the loaded horses could only advance slowly down the toilsome declivity, when our guide lost the way, which was peculiarly annoying, as the day was far advanced, and Astara, our halting-place, still distant.

After wandering about for some time, vainly endeavouring to find the road, we came upon three tents belonging to the Dereh-ilee tribe. They were of the simplest possible construction, merely the boughs of trees stuck into the ground, with their tops bent so as to meet, forming an arch, and covered with a thick dark-coloured felt. The men were absent in the woods, but we found two or three women and children; one of the former, an old woman of about sixty, was the ugliest specimen of humanity I think I ever beheld. The others were much younger, and, though not pretty, possessed rather a pleasing expression of countenance. They conducted us into the road, and we again resumed our journey. We were now, as far as I could judge, about half-way down the descent; and, at this height above the sea, the leaves were still on the trees, though yellow and beginning to fall. The forest contained a few oaks, but chiefly beech and sycamore, with a scanty underwood of medlar, apple-trees, and stunted holly-bushes; on the former I found some fruit, though not yet arrived at perfection. Here and there the wood was cleared in small patches for cultivation. We passed several tents of the Dereh-ilee tribe, of which there are some thirty families; these, and three or four families of the Tchibenchees, so named from their occupation of keeping bees, are the only tent-inhabiting tribes to be found in this part of Taulish.

Further down we came to a stratum of clouds, and for some time were enveloped in a thick mist: here the oaks had disappeared, and the beech pre-

dominated; the trees being about three times the size of those at the top of the mountains, and exhibiting the dense green foliage of summer.

The turf was covered with moss, wild strawberries, and a great variety of other plants. The only birds I saw were some woodpeckers, but the blackbird and thrush were numerous at the foot of the hills.

The road was now almost impassable, deep holes full of mud and water being formed between the roots of the trees, which, spreading like network over the surface of the ground, were exceedingly painful and dangerous to the limbs of the horses. We were frequently obliged to dismount, and lead the animals. One poor brute, which luckily carried nothing but the stable furniture, stumbled, and rolled head over heels some five or six times down the side of a hill, until brought up by a large tree: I thought every bone in its body must have infallibly been broken; but it appeared more frightened than hurt, and walked on as if nothing had happened. We were now near the foot of the mountains; the underwood of rank vegetation became very dense, and the wild vines were hanging in festoons from the trees:—the weather was warm, the birds were singing merrily among the bushes, and the wintry scene of the morning had vanished as if by magic, and in the short space of a few hours had been replaced by midsummer. The road we had travelled was not that commonly adopted by caravans, as the usual one was impracticable, on account of the late destruction by a flood of some bridge over the Astara river. We forded this stream at the small

village of Kishveh, consisting of about half a dozen huts, some built of stakes and mud, and some of logs, both being covered with a high slanting roof, thatched with rice-straw and the branches of trees. They have no chimneys, being afraid of the thatch taking fire; but the smoke escapes through the door, which extends to the top of the walls for that purpose, and must therefore be continually kept open.

Having crossed the river, we were assured by our guide that we should soon arrive at Astara. Time, however, wore on; the sun set, and the road hardly practicable by daylight became doubly difficult in the dark. The jackals, and other beasts of the forest, commenced a most dismal howling in every direction; the rain began to fall, and our guide appeared completely bewildered. After crossing and recrossing the river several times, we halted near some cottages, which were thickly scattered among the trees, and obtained a fresh guide and a couple of naphtha lamps, which proved a great relief to the horses; and in half an hour more we arrived at a house already prepared for us, a man having been despatched very early from Nemeen for that purpose.

Tired and hungry, we were obliged to content ourselves with merely some boiled rice for dinner, and with the bare floor for our bed, as the cook and our baggage had remained behind in the forest.

CHAPTER IV.

Astara.—The River.—Cutting Iron.—Ghileh-keran.—Revenue of Meer Caussim Khan's District.—Fishing.—The Caspian.—Costume of the Peasantry.—Difficulty of obtaining Information.—Departure from Astara.—Shells.—Scenery of the Coast.—Arrival at Hehvee.—Wild Hog.—Hehvee.—Departure.—Names of Rivers.—The Kerghanagh-rood.—Village of Kerghanagh.—A kind Invitation.—Ferrajoollah Beg.—Civility.—Persian Dinner.—Persian Appetite.—We remain a day at Kerghanagh.—Royal Tiger.—Wild Beasts inhabiting Gheelaun.—Persian Manner of Eating.—Leave Kerghanagh.—A Taulish House.—Mode of Collecting Attendants.—Take leave of the Beg.—The Kummer.—Fishing.—Modes of taking Wild Fowl.—Rivers forded during the day.—Arrival at Coopoorchar.—Taulish.

After a comfortless night, we rose with the sun, and, taking our guns, sallied forth to look at the place. The morning was most lovely; not a cloud was to be seen, except some light vapours hanging about the neighbouring mountains; the dew was sparkling on the leaves, and grass and everything wore the appearance of the month of June.

We had supposed Astara to be a town enjoying a considerable trade with Russia; but we found that the name was applied to a district containing eight villages, six of which are on the Russian side of the river, forming the boundary of their possessions in this direction, and two on the Persian side. That in

which we were lodged was situated at the mouth of the river close to the sea, and is called Dahen Kennar (mouth side). The other Persian village, half a mile from the sea, is called Khoshkee Dahen (dry mouth), where we had obtained our guide the previous evening. Each is said to contain fifty or sixty houses; but as they are so widely scattered among the trees, and only one or two are to be seen at the same time, it is almost impossible to form an idea of their number from casual observation.

The river is about forty yards broad; and on the Persian side are two ranges of storehouses for the reception of merchandise, and a good natural quay, alongside which lay two or three flat-bottomed boats, of about three tons' burden. Across the mouth is a bar of sand, partly above water, leaving only a narrow, shallow passage on the northern side, by which these boats enter; they are employed along the coast to land the cargoes of vessels, which are obliged to lie a couple of miles out at sea. A Russian was at this time at anchor in the offing.

Astara is merely a place of landing and loading goods; there is no bazar nor market, and nothing is disposed of here, but what arrives is immediately transported to Ardebeel, and is included in the account of the trade of that city; and what comes from the interior is shipped at once to Russia. The iron, on landing, is thrown on the beach, where the bars are cut into a convenient length for land carriage. The operation is performed in the open air; the only apparatus being a pair of bellows, some charcoal, an anvil, a hammer, and a kind of chisel. We

found several parties of men busily engaged in this work: they receive half a shahee, or a little more than a farthing, for cutting each bar. There is no custom-house here, and very irregular accounts, if any, are kept of the trade; as before mentioned, we were referred for them to Ardebeel.

On the Russian side of the river, immediately opposite, is the village of Ghileh-keran, containing about four hundred houses, of which only two or three are visible from this side, the remainder being buried among the trees. It is inhabited by Mussulmans. Except a commandant, and a guard of fifteen Cossacks, no Russians are settled there. No duties are taken on goods entering the Russian territory; but an officer seals the packages, which proceed to Lankeran, where the customs are levied. The Russians have established a quarantine station there, and are building a stone fort, which was said to be nearly completed; and we heard that the guns intended for it had lately been brought there.

The country, as far south as a stream called the Tchilivend, is under the government of Meer Caussim Khan. Its revenue amounts to 3500 tomauns, of which he receives . . . Tmns. 1500

The Shahzadeh Khanum .	„	1000
And he pays the Government	„	1000
	Tmns.	3500

We continued our stroll along the beach, and then, turning towards the jungle, endeavoured to find a pheasant, as we were told they were there in abun-

dance; our search, however, was unsuccessful. On our return we found the baggage had arrived, having spent the night in the woods; and, as their horses as well as our own appeared much fatigued, we determined to give them a day's rest.

After breakfast I took my rod and fishing-tackle, and went down to the river. Salmon were said to be generally plentiful, though now the season was almost too far advanced; but I was told that there was great variety of other fish. I hired a small canoe, called a "noh," formed of the hollowed trunk of a single tree, which the boatman managed dexterously with a pole, and we pushed up the stream. The depth seldom exceeded five feet, in general it was three. The banks were wooded, and exceedingly picturesque. The water, discoloured by the late rains, together with a burning sun overhead, foreboded little sport with a fly: I took out a salmon-fly, however, and whipped away for a quarter of an hour without a single rise. I next tried in succession artificial minnows, worms, dough, meat, and bread and cheese; and, having patiently watched my float for about four hours, without the slightest indication of a nibble, put up my rod, and returned home.

I found that it still wanted an hour to sunset; so, with my gun and sketch-book I sauntered down to the beach, and took a view of the entrance of the river, from the point of the bank at its mouth. This bank and the neighbouring beach were almost entirely formed of the detritus of the cockle, the only shell to be found. During my walk I killed two

pintailed grouse, and saw many flocks of wild fowl, but all flying very high.

I wandered about till long after the sun had set, enjoying the delicious weather. The view of the Caspian had something of that peculiarly pleasing effect which an expanse of water generally produces, but the refreshing salt scent of the ocean was wanting, for the water was only brackish; and the absence of all shipping, save a solitary, strangely-rigged Russian craft in the distance, the want of sea-weed, and the general appearance of the coast, suggested the idea of a large lake. This sea is usually called by the natives the "Derrieh Hushtakhan" (Sea of Astrachan). It is also called the "Derrieh Khizzar." The evening was very damp, and I returned home nearly wet through by the heavy dew that was falling.

The peasantry along the coast are sallow, unhealthy-looking people. Dreadful fevers, ague, putrid sore-throats, and various eye complaints, are the prevalent diseases. The costume is very simple; that of the women consists of a cloth round the head, a pair of wide shalwars or trowsers tied tightly above the hips, and of a short shirt reaching scarcely halfway down the thigh: both the latter articles of dress are generally of a dark blue calico. The men wear the same shirt and trowsers; but, when out of doors, they put over them a felt coat without seam, and an immense pair of wide dark-coloured shalwars, of a coarse native manufacture. They are shod with a sandal of raw hide, laced over the instep and ancle; and from a belt round the waist hang a kummer,

powder-horn, and various small leather bags containing apparatus connected with their arms, while a long flint-and-steel gun completes their equipment.

We had been attempting to obtain some distinct information regarding the trade here; and the following will show the extreme difficulty attending such endeavours. We found a man, who received and forwarded the various merchandise which arrived from Astrachan, and who at first referred us to the custom-house at Ardebeel; but, after pressing him, he at last admitted that he had kept accounts of them himself, and promised to draw up for us a correct statement. Leaving us to execute his promise, he almost immediately returned with a paper, which it would have been impossible to have written in so short a time; and which, on examination, turned out to be very imperfect memoranda, five or six years old. We represented to him that such notes were of no use; and he then promised, that, if we sent our Meerza, he would give him the information in a complete form. The Meerza went at the appointed time, but the man had disappeared. The fact is, that these people, never thinking of inquiring about anything in which their own interest is not involved, cannot conceive why we should do so; they fear that in some way or other we wish to interfere with them, or may bring them into trouble; and hence they either at once refuse, or indirectly avoid giving any information they may possess.

On rising the following morning the sky was one mass of dark clouds, and threatened a heavy fall of

rain; but the climate is here so variable that a change may be expected from hour to hour, and this afforded some hope that, in spite of present appearances, we might yet arrive at the end of our stage with a dry coat.

All things being ready, and our baggage having started an hour before us, we left Astara. The road lay along the beach, formed, as before mentioned, of sand and the detritus of the cockle, which is thrown up in some places in great abundance. Besides this, there are only two other kinds of shell found in the Caspian,—the spirorbis, and a kind of muscle; but the cockle is by far the most plentiful on the southern shores. As it is contrary to the Mahomedan religion to eat shell-fish, it is not known as an article of food. The sands are in some places two hundred, but often do not exceed fifteen yards in breadth; and thick forest, with a dense border of underwood, consisting of hawthorn, wild pomegranate, and medlar trees, descend from the mountains to their very verge. The pomegranates were exceedingly acid; but some few of the medlars that were nearly ripe proved eatable. The tracks of the wild boar were numerous, though the only game we saw were two or three woodcocks.

Mile after mile the scenery continued the same. We passed in succession the rivers Khodjeh-kerree, Khanrood, Sevendevil, Tchilivend, Hadgee-rustam, Lemeer, and Nobat-chai. They are all clear shallow streams about twenty yards broad, and had formed sand-banks at their mouths. About half-past two P. M., we came to the river Hehvee, distant from

Astara twenty-eight miles; and, turning along its banks into the forest, arrived at a village of the same name, where we intended to put up for the night.

While a house was being prepared for our reception, and our loads being unpacked, we took our guns and strolled into the woods, which in some places were quite impassable from swamp, brambles, and prickly shrubs, but in others were more open. Under some fine tall oaks we saw the tracks of numerous wild pigs, which had been turning up the ground in every direction. Our guide said that there were immense quantities; and Mahomedan prejudices never appeared more unreasonable than at that moment, standing, as they did, between me and a leg of wild pork. We saw nothing till after sunset, when, as we were returning home, a great many woodcocks flew over our heads on their way to the sea-shore.

Hehvee is situated about a mile from the sea on the left bank of the river; and the houses, as usual, scattered through the forest, rendered it impossible to calculate their probable number. The inhabitants cultivate rice, keep bees, and make a pretty kind of matting of reeds. The common fruits are figs, apples, pears, and grapes; the latter we tasted and found very tolerable, though little or no care seemed to be taken of the vines.

We were now in Balla Khan's territory, which is divided from that of Meer Caussim Khan by the river Tchilivend; and is said to contain between twenty and thirty villages, and a great many families

of tent-dwellers, who go generally under the appellation of Tchooban (shepherd), as they keep large flocks.

We left Hehvee at about eight o'clock on the morning of the 18th; and, fording the river over a clear stony bed, continued our journey along the coast, which presented the same description of scenery as the day before. The only novel object we fell in with was a tent, formed of the sails of a vessel which lay about a mile in the offing; the crew of which had landed to cut timber to load for Bakoo.

We forded the rivers Sheelawaun, Khat-mesourah, Lissar-chai, and Kerghanagh-rood, all in some measure dangerous on account of quicksands, and requiring experienced guides; though I think that the danger is generally much exaggerated. The Kerghanagh-rood is by far the largest stream we had as yet crossed; and a wide stony bed of some three hundred yards, strewed with rocks and the trunks of large trees, show that it must be a tremendous torrent in the spring. At this time the water was running in several small rills over a nearly dry bed.

At the mouth of this river was formerly a fishery of sturgeon, which had been lately discontinued by Balla Khan, on account of a jealousy exhibited by the Persian Government at the Russians being admitted to this part of the coast.

We reached the banks of the stream late in the afternoon; and, having sent our Gholaum and a guide in advance to procure lodgings at the village of

Kerghanagh, we turned from the sea, and, proceeding inland about three miles through the forest, arrived at our intended resting-place at sunset.

The houses are scattered through the jungle, and built in the usual manner of this country; some were roofed with shingles, covered with stones to keep them in their places, and the rest were thatched with rice-straw or reeds. This village is the largest in the district of Kerghanagh-rood, and is the winter residence of Balla Khan, who retires in the summer with most of the inhabitants to his yeilauks at Aug-evler, which are described by all who have been there as exceedingly beautiful in scenery, and healthy in climate. The Khan was at this time at Enzellee.

There appeared to be some difficulty about preparing a house for us; the owner of the one chosen grumbling, and protesting that if he gave it to us he should get into a scrape with his master's son, who wished to make us his own guests; but as we were very tired, and it was already dark, we declared we would remain where we were. In the meantime, however, the gentleman in question himself appeared, inviting us most pressingly to go to his residence, where every preparation had been made, and where we should be better accommodated than in the village. As he seemed so much in earnest, we accepted his proffered kindness, mounted our horses again, and rode off with him.

Ferrajoollah Beg, Balla Khan's second son, was a jolly round-faced vulgar looking-fellow, terribly pitted with the small-pox. Contrary, however, to

the rules of physiognomy, he turned out to be a sensible, shrewd man, well acquainted with the history of his own country, and knowing a great deal of that of England and India; he had also a tolerable idea of Europe, and his remarks were more pertinent than those of most of his countrymen.

On arriving at his house we were shown into a comfortable apartment; rose-water was poured over our hands and beards, and tea was served. Our host, after many polite speeches, wishing to put us completely at our ease, requested us to stretch out our legs, instead of sitting in the Eastern fashion; "Or," observed he, "perhaps you would like to walk up and down the room." We assured him, however, that, having been in the saddle since the morning, we thought we had enjoyed enough exercise for one day; and that we felt perfectly comfortable. The English habit of pacing up and down a room is a matter of profound astonishment to Asiatics in general, who have no idea of any person walking about when he has the option of sitting still. The Hindoos, I have been told, think it a part of our worship.

After tea the Beg left us to ourselves for about an hour, when he returned, accompanied by his two brothers, Nooroollah Beg and Shookroollah Beg; a brother of Mehmet Khan, chief of the Shah-sevens, and some other friends, and dinner immediately followed. A tray containing a chillo and pillo, radishes, fried eggs, a stew of meat, and a bowl of sherbet, was allotted to each two persons; and, at the word "Bismillah" (In the name of God), the

company fell to in silence, unbroken during the whole time save by the sound of the various jaws in process of mastication. Hands were thrust deep into the greasy dishes, rice squeezed into balls and swallowed with astonishing rapidity; and in less than a quarter of an hour little remained of the immense piles which had been set before them. Water was then brought in, and each guest slightly wetted his fingers, afterwards wiping them on his pocket-handkerchief or his coat, as the case might be; which ceremony had scarcely been performed, when our Shah-seven friend and one or two others, loosening their belts, immediately lapsed into a state of torpidity. My companion and myself had made a plenteous meal, but our dishes appeared comparatively untouched. The Persians are very large eaters, particularly those of the lower classes; five of our servants, who dined together, devoured every day about twenty pounds of bread, besides a good allowance of meat and fruit; and one evening three of the grooms ate among them ten pounds of rice, and were grumbling because they could not get any more. The Persians say that the English do not eat; they only play with their food.

After dinner, having received intelligence that our baggage had halted for the night at the mouth of the river, we sent a person to bring it on; and in the meantime, as it was late, the Beg very kindly offered to lend us bedding, which we thankfully accepted. On undressing, I found myself covered with swellings, occasioned by the bite of some insect, which were most painfully irritable.

Our baggage arrived during the night; and, as soon as we awoke in the morning, the servants came to represent the necessity of resting the horses, stating that it was forty-eight miles to Enzellee, and that if we started to-day, the animals could not proceed far, and we should arrive there at sunset the following evening, which would not give the necessary time to look for a comfortable lodging. Ferrajoollah Beg, at the same time, sent a message to say that he should be delighted if we would extend our visit. All things, therefore, being considered, though we were anxious to reach Enzellee, we determined to enjoy the luxury of a day's repose.

The morning was delightful; and we took a walk about the premises with our host and his other guests. He showed us the skin of a royal tiger, a very large animal, which had been killed about a year before; five or six of them are shot annually by the peasantry.

The wild beasts inhabiting these forests are the royal tiger, panther, an animal called the vasheg, which I believe to be the lynx, the wolf, hog, jackal, bear, loose or chebelek, said to be of the colour of a tabby cat, and which I thought might be the wild cat, but they said not; and an animal called the shing, the skin of which is valuable. I have no idea what this is. There are more than one species of the goat and deer; of the latter there is a fine animal called the maral. Otters are found in the rivers.

About twelve o'clock, the usual Persian time, we were summoned to breakfast, and all returned to

the house exceedingly sharp-set. The meal was a repetition of dinner, and the same feeding scene took place as on the previous evening. I have often heard it remarked, with respect to the Eastern custom of eating with the fingers, that it was a mistake to regard it as unpleasant; and that the hands, which were thoroughly washed, were cleaner implements than our knives and forks. In Persia, I can only say that I found the washing a very inefficient ceremony; no soap is used, a little tepid water being merely poured over the hands before and after dinner, and they are oftentimes wiped with a pocket-handkerchief which has not been washed for perhaps six months. The voracious manner in which they swallow their food is disgusting. In general, Persians admire the European custom of using the knife and fork, and confess that it is more decent in appearance, and cleanlier in reality, than their own; but Ferrajoollah Beg, while admitting this, observed, that after all he preferred eating with the hand, as it imparted a flavour to the food: judging from the colour and appearance of his own hand, I should think the observation correct.

It was nearly one o'clock when the company dispersed, and feeling disinclined to go out in the broiling sun, (for, though the middle of November, it felt like the middle of summer,) I occupied myself till dusk in finishing some rough sketches made on the road; and then taking my gun strolled along the edge of the forest till dark, when I returned, not having seen any game. This evening we dined

alone, and made our own cook prepare the meal, as we were already tired of chillo and pillo.

Having a long day's journey before us, we rose early, and left Kerghanagh, accompanied by Ferrajoollah Beg and Shookroollah Beg. The former soon took leave, but the latter continued with us to the village of Jellowdar, where a house had been cleared and a capital breakfast prepared. The house I will describe, as a fair specimen of the dwellings throughout Taulish and Gheelaun, though perhaps rather better furnished than the generality. It consisted of a single room plastered with mud, having two or three arched recesses in the walls. The fire was placed in a shallow semi-circular hole in the earthen floor, immediately in front of a projecting mass of clay, about four feet in length and breadth, and two feet high, serving to support the cooking utensils. There was no outlet for the smoke except through the door, which was made for this purpose the whole height of the apartment, and had of necessity to be kept open while the fire was burning. The ceiling was formed of square wooden beams placed close together, which had become blackened by the constant action of the smoke. The mud-work of the walls was very neatly executed, and the recesses were edged with white plaster, though this is dispensed with in the poorer cottages. The roof was of good rice-straw thatch, projecting many feet from the walls, and supported by wooden pillars, thus forming a verandah, where in fine weather the women sit and spin.

Breakfast being over, we left the village, still accompanied by Shookroollah Beg, and proceeded through the forest towards the sea-shore. As we went along, he occasionally ordered the men we happened to see in the way to follow him, so that in a short time we had six or eight fellows armed with rifles and kummers marching in our train. "My followers are always ready," observed he; "and, when I go abroad, I leave home alone, and collect them in this manner as I journey onwards."

Having accompanied us some distance, the Beg and his followers took leave, and we continued our march, regretting much that we could not afford time to stay longer with these wild foresters, whose kindness and hospitality had gained our esteem. Their mode of life reminds one of that of the Scotch Highlanders in days of yore; they are divided into clans, each chief having his own retainers, who are always armed, both from habit and as a protection against wild beasts. The kummer is a favourite means of defence, which they are seldom without. It is a formidable two-edged pointed weapon, very much like the ancient Roman sword, with a blade about a foot and a-half long and three inches broad, generally very sharp, and capable of inflicting the most deadly wounds. The people consider it cowardly to stab, and use it only for cutting; a thrust would probably be fatal.

During our march I perceived a man fishing at the mouth of a small river, and bought from him a fine trout, weighing about seven pounds, for a sahib

kurraun (one shilling), though I was afterwards told that this was nearly double the usual price. The flesh was not very red, but proved well-flavoured. At this season these fish quit the rivers, and the fisherman with a long fork in his hands was watching on the shore at the mouth of the stream for those which were accidentally thrown within his reach by the surf. They say salmon abound in these rivers from June till the end of October; which, with the sefeed-mahee (white fish), resembling a grey mullet, and many other kinds of fish, form the chief food of the inhabitants.

Further on we came to several small reed-huts, serving as a shelter during the night for men who catch wild ducks. In many places near the coast are extensive swamps, the resort in winter of immense numbers of wild fowl, where long nets are suspended to high poles in various directions; and below them are placed decoy-ducks, tied by the legs to a short piece of twine, which is fixed by a peg in the bottom. During the night the wild fowl are attracted by the cry of the tame birds, and flying, low, are caught by the neck in the meshes of the nets. Another method is also practised. A large net is fixed upright, and kept in that position by a long cord held by the fowler, who is concealed among the high reeds. Decoy-ducks are placed within its range, and, on the wild fowl alighting among them, the string is let go, and the net falling over the birds makes them fly upwards, when they are caught in the meshes. This method is always practicable; but the other only succeeds on dark

stormy nights, when one man may sometimes take ten or fifteen ducks. All along the coast, both in Gheelaun and Mauzunderoon, multitudes of these birds are annually thus captured.

Continuing onwards we passed the following rivers:—the Hindekerron, the Kelfarood, the Novarood, the Allalon-chai, the Kholasoror, the Dinachar-chai (a considerable river), the Soomerkerron, the Alekion, the Nokendeh, the Shooaree-chai, and the Mahmoud Tukianee. Most of them were at this season shallow streams, but become rapid torrents in the spring.

After a ride of about thirty miles along the beach, which presented the same scenery as heretofore, we arrived at sunset at Coopoorchar. It was a small village, built in a style similar to the others along this coast, and having nothing remarkable in its appearance. We saw here orange-trees for the first time, and roses and many other flowers were in full bloom.

This is the last village in Taulish, which, though essentially part of Gheelaun, and nominally under the authority of the Governor of that province, is sometimes considered as separate. It is divided into five or six different districts, each under its respective Governor, who is virtually an independent chieftain, and the only authority acknowledged by the peasantry. Most of the inhabitants retire to the yeilauks in the summer, and for this reason very little silk is produced, as it is during the hot months that the worms require unremitting attention.

The revenue of Taulish is altogether about 30,000 tomauns (15,000*l.* sterling), from which 14,000 tomauns are deducted for the maintenance of the contingent of men furnished by the chiefs, as will be explained hereafter.

CHAPTER V.

Departure from Coopoorchar.—Approach Enzellee.—Our Quarters. —Present from the Governor.—Fishing.—Bad Weather.—Receive Visits.—Persian Window.—An Invitation.—Mohamed Ameen Khan.—Soldiery.—Military resources of Gheelaun.—Calling the Muster-roll.—The Admiral of the Caspian.—Review.—Cannon and Foundry at Enzellee.—"Bust."—Visit to the Admiral.—Remarks.—A satisfactory conclusion.—Fine day!—The Lake of Enzellee.—Rivers flowing into it.—Fishes. —Boats.—Pelicans.—Rain.—Pheasant Shooting.—Enzellee.—Its Trade—Its Revenue.—Price of Provisions.—Departure for Peeree Bazar.—Arrival.—Horses.—The Road to Resht.—The Mongodeh River.—Cause of the Bad State of the Road.—Arrival at Resht.

THE previous evening had foreboded a storm, which, however, had passed away during the night; not a cloud was visible, and the wind had entirely ceased. We mounted our horses at ten o'clock, and rode for twelve miles along the ridge of sand, which, varying in breadth from a quarter to half a mile, separates the lake of Enzellee from the Caspian. This curious strip is partly covered with jungle, among which is an occasional house or two. I put several rabbits out of the bushes, but could not get a shot at them: I have not seen any of these animals in the East before, except in islands, where they are called the "island hare."

After an intensely hot ride, we approached En-

zellee, situated at the eastern extremity of the sand-bank. Outside the village we were met by Noor-oollah Beg, Balla Khan's second son, who had arrived the previous evening, and given notice of our approach. He was attended by about thirty of his wild clansmen, armed in the manner before described. Shortly afterwards we met a deputation of the inhabitants, and proceeded in state towards the village, where a great crowd had collected to witness our arrival. Near the entrance I observed a number of grave-stones, marking the burial-place of those who fell victims to the dreadful plague which visited the whole of this coast in 1830-31, and destroyed here about two-thirds of the population. We were now met by two or three topchees (artillerymen), who, heading the procession, marshalled us to our quarters, which consisted of whatever chambers we were pleased to choose in the upper story of a large unfinished house; the ground-floor being merely an open hall. Much hesitation was not necessary in the selection, as one apartment only was at all habitable, and its sole recommendation was that it had doors; out of four, however, two alone would shut properly, and the side of the room which the window should have closed was open, so that in fact it possessed but three sides. All this was very annoying, as we intended remaining here some days; and the more particularly so, as we had sent on the Gholaum a day before, with express orders to see that, at least, a habitable place was prepared. This man had no idea of what we considered comfort; and a gorgeously painted window in the hall below

having attracted his admiration, and the building being large, he immediately decided that it was a most desirable residence; and, when he met us outside the town, declared with great satisfaction that he had found a perfect palace. There was, however, no alternative, since another place could not have been procured without great delay; so that, on the people promising to put up a window immediately, we spread our carpets, and unpacked our baggage, somewhat softened by the prospect of a week's rest.

Soon after our arrival the Wallee or Governor of Gheelaun, Mahomed Ameen Khan, sent us a handsome present of four large trays of melons, apples, pomegranates, various kinds of oranges and lemons, and six or seven boxes of sweetmeats. It is considered a polite attention to send sweets and fruits, of which the Persians are very fond and with which they decorate their rooms, piling the fruits in a tasty manner in the recesses in the walls.

The evening was most lovely, and we went in a boat to the entrance of the lake. I had with me my fishing tackle, but could not catch anything; the owner of the boat, however, was more successful with a casting-net, and caught two fish, which I took to be bream: the Persian name is "seam." They proved watery, and without flavour, and were full of bones.

The next morning, the 22nd, the rain descended in torrents. The weather yesterday had been very warm, and it appears to be generally the case here, that the vapour which has been drawn up during a

hot day falls the next in the form of rain. The sky, however, cleared a little for half an hour before breakfast time, and in that interval we were visited by half the inhabitants of Enzellee, and among others came Balla Khan. I was much interested in seeing this Taulish chief, both from what I had before heard of him, and on account of the civilities we had received from his sons. Mr. Fraser speaks of him as a specimen of a "perfectly well-bred Persian gentleman," and hence I was not in the least prepared to see such a rough-looking, ugly, old fellow; but twenty years over a man's head make great changes. Mustafa Khan, of Assaulim, a Taulish district, was also present, and seemed, as far as appearance went, much the most gentlemanly of the two. Then came the commandant of artillery, a most ludicrous little figure. He was a native of Azerbijan, and talked chiefly about his guns and "Minti Sahib," as he called Colonel Monteith, whom he had known when in Persia. He invited us to visit the arsenal, and see his men manœuvre.

The room soon became so full of khans, begs, merchants, moollahs, and other worthies, that some were obliged to retire to give place to the newcomers, there being literally no space for them to sit down. All these people had to take a cup of tea, and smoke two or three kalleoons; and, though exceedingly hungry, we were forced to practise the mortification of our appetites for upwards of two hours. At last one of the great men rose, and, taking leave, was followed by all the rest, and we went to breakfast.

The rain had recommenced, and continued to fall heavily during the remainder of the day. We occupied ourselves with reading and writing, and with trying to make our room more habitable: several arched openings in the walls over the doors were stopped up, and the window was put in.

Windows in Persia are generally made of stained glass put together in very small pieces, of different sizes and colours, and forming what we should call a kaleidoscope pattern. The manner of putting them up is curious. The wood-work having been already made of several hundred small pieces, corresponding with each other in the desired pattern, is fixed in its place before the glass is put in. This is not done with putty; but the glazier, beginning from the bottom of the frame, takes it to pieces, and then joins it together again, inserting, as he goes on, each bit of glass into the particular groove formed in the wood-work for its reception. When finished, these windows are sometimes very beautiful; but as the glass does not fit tightly in every place, if there be any wind, it makes a continual jingling noise, and the air passes through the crevices.

We were confined to the house the whole of the two following days, but on the morning of the 25th, though a drizzling rain was still falling, we received an invitation from Mahomed Ameen Khan to come down to the sea-shore, and witness the calling of the muster-roll of the toofenkchees (musqueteers), as it was a fine day. It appeared to me, that, as one might easily get wet through in a quarter of an

hour, it was rather too damp to be called fine; but, as everything is comparative, perhaps this might be a fine day for Gheelaun, where it sometimes pours in torrents for a month together. We put on our cloaks, and were conducted to a small wooden shed erected on the beach; here we found the Wallee, a little, shrivelled, high-dried sort of man, surrounded by several of the Taulish chiefs, who for the most part furnish the men. Chairs were placed for us, and they proceeded to business.

The men were drawn up on one side, those of every chief separately; and, on the names of each man being called out, he stepped forward, made a bow, and filed off to the other side. They were each armed with a long flint-and-steel gun, a thick stick, and a kummer, and, with few exceptions, were the most miserable and sickly-looking wretches that can be conceived.

The Taulish chiefs are bound to furnish about six hundred of their military retainers at the demand of the Governor of Gheelaun. For his own quota of the force, each chief deducts from the revenue, for which he is responsible to Government, about twenty-three tomauns per man, which, however, he puts in his own pocket. The men follow their usual occupations, and in no way differ from the ordinary peasantry, from which class they are selected. Besides the Taulish men, there are one hundred Asterabad musqueteers, and an hundred and fifty artillerymen, both paid by Government. At the present muster, many of the chiefs brought more than their contingent of men; and, in case of neces-

sity, nearly the whole male population of Taulish could be made available.

The scene was rather amusing; and, as it was soon over, did not become tedious. The old fellow who called over the names persisted in shouting out the wrong ones, though continually corrected, to the great annoyance of the Government scribe, who was checking them; and the most ludicrous, dirty-looking figures stepped forward to such names as "Ramzaun Beg, the son of Rose-water;" and "Milk of Mohamed."

As we left the ground, we met our fat friend, the commander of the Topchees, who seemed very anxious to exhibit his men and guns, and was considerably disappointed when the Governor observed, "Yes, please God, we will see them to-morrow." The day had cleared up a little, and the rain had for the moment ceased; but, to-morrow—the major seemed to think his chance of display very small.

Soon after returning home, we received a visit from Mahomed Ameen Khan, accompanied by Aga Meer Sadok, the Derrieh Beggee, or "Admiral" of the Caspian; an empty title, as the Persians do not possess a single ship of war, and not more than two or three small merchant-vessels. He was a very gentlemanly and intelligent man, and formed a striking contrast with his companion, who appeared exceedingly stupid, and had hardly a word to say for himself.

To-day our horses, which had been miserably stabled here, were made to swim across the en-

trance of the lake, and went on their way to Resht, ourselves intending to go by water.

During the night the rain fell heavily; at nine o'clock this morning it abated, and the sky looked a little clearer. According to promise, we went to visit the arsenal, and found the fat major in front of his hundred and fifty topchees, in all the excitement of marching and countermarching. They had no arms; and the exhibition reminded me of what little boys at school undergo at the hands of some old drill-sergeant. They marched backwards and forwards, clapped their hands, and performed sundry other equally scientific evolutions, occasionally enlivened and accompanied by three cracked trumpets; the major trotting about the while in such an absurd manner that we could with difficulty restrain a burst of laughter. It would not be easy to conceive a more unmilitary-looking figure. He was a little, punchy, round-shoulderèd man, with so short a neck that his head appeared fixed on his shoulders by the chin. He wore a pair of large white trowsers, Hessian boots, a Persian lambskin cap, and a threadbare plum-coloured coat, with red cuffs and collar, embroidered with silver, set off by a pair of epaulettes of the same metal, which, from long service, looked like copper. Over his right shoulder was a white sword-belt, which would have been much improved by a little pipe-clay. When all was concluded, he came towards us in a violent perspiration, with a smile beaming on his countenance, which plainly indicated that he thought he had rather astonished us. We expressed our delight at the truly military spec-

tacle we had just witnessed; and he begged that, on arriving at Tehraun, we would mention to the Shah the perfect state of discipline of his men. They were dressed in white loose trowsers and boots, the common Persian cap, and a single-breasted jacket, the colour of which appeared to be left to the fancy of the wearer—red, blue, brown, and almost every other colour being adopted. The men were of different sizes, and, in marching, the endeavours of the little ones to step out equally with the taller, who all took the longest possible strides, had a very ridiculous effect.

We next inquired about the gun practice we had expected to witness, but it appeared that there were only one or two gun-carriages in serviceable condition, so that nothing could be done in that way. There were twelve guns at this place, of the following calibre: two 18 lbs.; two 14 lbs.; two 12 lbs.; two 6 lbs.; and four 3 lbs.: most of them were dismounted, and new carriages were being prepared for them. We saw, besides, some ten or twelve models of long six-pounders, of which twenty-four were to be cast here during this winter. One of the 18 lbs. seemed a good gun, and had lately been turned out. This is one of the best arsenals in Persia; but it was just now rather out of order.

In one corner of the yard were some sixty or more of the Astrabadee Toofenkchees, who had taken bust there, complaining that they received no pay, and that the Sirdar (general) had eaten their money. This taking "bust," or sanctuary, is very common in Persia; and, when adopted on such an occasion, is a

quiet way of expressing discontent. They remain night and day, and no one can remove them; their friends bring them food; and as the thing, of course, soon spreads abroad, and perhaps reaches the ears of Government, it seldom fails of obtaining its end, and the fear of disgrace or punishment extorts what a sense of justice would otherwise have withheld. A stable is considered an inviolable sanctuary, and, if a horse is picquetted, near its head is a place of refuge, which the Persians much respect; as, they say, if this be violated, the animal will never afterwards carry its rider to victory.

During the course of the day we paid visits to the Governor, the Derrieh Beggee, and several other people. We found the Admiral in a very prettily decorated apartment, the white plastered walls of which, built with a variety of arched niches fitted with mirrors, and adorned with painting and gilding, had a very beautiful appearance. He was surrounded by several of the chief merchants of Resht, who chatted merrily, asking all sorts of questions about England, some of which were very pertinent, and others absurd and childish. Persians, in general, have no idea as to the propriety of the time for introducing observations; and, in your own presence, will audibly make their remarks and speculations regarding your appearance or affairs, with the greatest freedom, though they are much too polite to say anything which they conceive to be offensive. On this occasion there was a discussion as to Mr. A.'s salary and appointment, and his business here; to all which we sat passive listeners. They were much puzzled

to know who I was, or in what capacity with regard to my friend; but at last decided that I had just arrived from England, with a rakm (commission, or written command,) from our Padishah, ordering Mr. A. to proceed to Tehraun, and that I was accompanying him to see it carried into effect. With regard to his business here, they could arrive at no satisfactory or plausible conclusion, as they could not conceive any one travelling through such a country for information, or mere pleasure; and they knew that there was a direct road between Tabreez and Tehraun which was both shorter and better.

During the day, though there had been thunder and lightning, yet, as at short intervals the rain intermitted, the weather was pronounced by the natives to be unusually bright. In the evening the sky promised a really fine day on the morrow, which we anxiously desired, having been latterly so confined to the house that we began to feel the effects of want of exercise.

As we hoped, so it turned out; and we availed ourselves of the opportunity to pay a visit to Balla Khan, whom we found in a small house with several other Taulish chieftains, surrounded by their wild retainers. I afterwards hired a boat, and employed myself in making some sketches of Enzellee and in examining the features of the lake.

The entrance to this curious piece of water is now about three hundred yards wide, but it is almost closed by a bar of sand, which extends nearly across it, and in some places is barely covered by a few inches of water. Close, however, to the point on

which Enzellee is situated is a narrow channel of sufficient depth for most of the vessels navigating the Caspian. Once inside this point, there is an excellent natural harbour; the water is deep, and the vessels lie close to the shore, which is formed entirely of sand. Alterations are continually taking place in the depth and appearance of the entrance, which they say was formerly only a few yards broad; and in several places reedy islands are springing up, and rapidly extending themselves, while in others those previously formed are disappearing. In front of the anchorage is a long island covered with trees and jungle, giving the channel between the appearance of a river. The island has a few inhabitants, and was originally joined to the point of the long strip of sand opposite to Enzellee; but it is now separated from it by a channel four hundred yards in width, and in some parts two fathoms deep. It would appear from the directions given by Hanway for anchoring off Enzellee, in his "Coasting Pilot of the Caspian Sea," that vessels were in his time unable to enter the lake. The Persian Government some time since ordered that a battery should be erected to protect the entrance; and the work, it was said, would be commenced next year. I counted nine Russian vessels along the quay; they were unwieldy-looking craft, very high in the stern, and rigged in a nondescript sort of style. I believe that there are about an hundred and thirty vessels, varying from forty to an hundred tons' burden, employed in the trade to Russia, besides many boats used in that along the coast.

The water of the lake is fresh, and is supplied by the numerous rivers which flow into it, of which the following are the principal:—

The Mushed Roodbar	The Khallakagee	from the district of Gascar.
„ Bahamber	„ Chokoover	
„ Ghorabar	„ Ispun	
The Boolgoor	The Choomiscal	from Fomen.
„ Sooloogondeh		
The Seearvee	The Hindoo-kaleh	from Toolun.
„ Lagsar	„ No-kaleh	
„ Siah-dervishun		
The Keeftarood	The Goulish-Kail	from Resht.
„ Peeree Bazar	„ Sheijan	
„ Mungodeh	„ Infarood	

Besides these there are many other small rivulets, which during the autumn and winter months are almost dry.

Among the multitudes of fish with which the lake literally swarms, are the sturgeon, the bream, a large kind of lake trout, the salmon, the sefeed-mahee, carp, and many others of the names of which I am ignorant. The fishery of the sefeed-mahee is rented by Meer Abou Talib Khan, the lessee of all the sturgeon fisheries in Gheelaun, for between 2800 and 3000 tomauns (1400*l.* and 1500*l.* sterling); and is, I believe, a profitable speculation, the fish being largely consumed in the province, and sent, salted, to all parts of the north of Persia. The sefeed-mahee is caught with a casting-net, which the natives use with great dexterity.

The boats on the lake are in general about twenty-

five feet long, sharp at both ends, and flat-bottomed on account of the shallowness of the water. They are usually managed by two men with broad paddles; one in the bow, and the other in the stern. When there is a little wind, they hoist a square sail, which however they manage very clumsily. They use also a canoe, being the excavated trunk of a tree, which will sometimes hold four or five persons, and is paddled by a man at the stern.

Having made my sketches, and looked in vain among the reedy islands for wild fowl, I ordered the boatmen to put me ashore. Multitudes of pelicans were sailing about, and the fish were leaping out of the water in every direction; but, though I tried for more than an hour, I did not succeed in catching any of them. The season was not yet far enough advanced for the wild fowl, which resort hither in vast quantities during the winter.

Before I reached home the sky had again become overcast, and large heavy drops were beginning to fall, which increased to a perfect torrent soon after I was fairly housed. It continued during the whole of the 28th, and confined us to our room. We had intended starting on the morrow for Resht, but were obliged to postpone it a day longer, as nothing could be prepared during such weather.

The following morning proved fine; and, having heard that pheasants were abundant on some of the islands of the lake, I proceeded to one which was pointed out as being more likely to produce sport than the rest. On landing, however, I found that the place was so covered with dense thickets of

bramble and almost equally impervious mulberry plantations, that all attempts at shooting among them were quite hopeless, and I very soon returned with my clothes torn to pieces; not, however, without having flattered myself into the belief that I had heard a pheasant get up near me.

Enzellee contains, perhaps, between three hundred and three hundred and fifty houses built with high pointed roofs, mostly thatched with reeds or rice-straw, but in some instances covered with baked tiles. In this part of Persia the inhabitants, in building houses, endeavour to select a situation with a good view, and do not hide their dwellings with a heavy mud wall, as in the upper provinces; and the picturesque style of building and the gardens in which the orange and citron stand conspicuous, give the place a pleasing appearance. Immediately opposite to Enzellee, on the point of a corresponding strip of sand, is the village of Sarian; but not more than half a dozen houses are visible, the rest being buried among the trees.

A trade is carried on with Astrachan, which they say has somewhat diminished since the road from Astara to Ardebeel has been established. The imports from Russia, on which a duty of five per cent. is levied, are said to amount annually to some 100,000 tomauns' worth, or about 50,000*l.*, and consist of the same goods that have been enumerated as passing through Astara to Ardebeel. There is also a considerable quantity of naphtha brought from Badcobeh and Bakoo, which the peasantry burn instead of oil, and which has a very

agreeable odour. The exports are chiefly of silk from Resht, and also of various native manufactures, and dried fruits from the interior.

The revenue derived by Government from Enzellee amounts to about 6580 tomauns per annum. Of this—

The custom-house yields . .	Tmns. 6000
Taxes on boats	480
,, houses	100
	Tmns. 6580

Every house belonging to a Government *employé* is free from taxation; all others pay about half a tomaun (five shillings) a-year. The revenue, therefore, of 100 tomauns gives only two hundred houses belonging to persons not in Government employ. I have sometimes been told that Enzellee contains six hundred houses; but from this circumstance, and the general appearance of the place, I should not think there are more than the number before mentioned.

Provisions are dear as compared with the price at Tabreez. Bread costs here about 1*s.* 2*d.* for 6lbs.; at Tabreez about 4*d.* A fowl here is 6*d.*; at Tabreez 2*d.* Mutton is of about the same value, but rice is cheaper. Bread is seldom found at the villages along the coast, and only in the towns even at this high price, as rice and fish are the principal food of the inhabitants.

On the 30th November, the weather being fine and having packed up our baggage, we left our little room as desolate and bare as when we had entered

it, and at nine o'clock departed for Peeree Bazar. Ourselves, servants, and baggage occupied two large boats, and, the wind being fair, a square sail was hoisted; which, with the occasional help of oars, carried us across the lake to the entrance of the Peeree Bazar river, a distance of about sixteen miles in three hours. We made very slow progress after entering the stream, which is not more than eight or nine yards wide, and closely bordered with a thick jungle of reeds, alders, and bramble-bushes. Many boats similar to our own passed us on their way to Enzellee. After having poled and rowed about two miles and a-half in little more than an hour, we came to an abrupt turning of the river, where two small brick sheds for the reception of goods marked the landing-place of Peeree Bazar. We saw nothing of the village, which lay only a few hundred yards further up the stream, but was totally concealed by the forest. A number of horses were waiting for us, which had been ordered by the Wallee. They were all small animals, and I never saw a more remarkable assortment of legs. Some had bow-legs—others were knock-kneed; some had one leg straight and the other crooked; while others had both bent in the same direction, one in and the other out. Some legs were very thin, and entirely denuded of hair; and others, on the contrary, were swollen, and of precisely the same thickness from the shoulder to the hoof. Altogether as a fancy display it was exceedingly curious, but spoke most impressively as to the dreadful state of the road we were about to traverse. The accounts I had

read of it had in some measure prepared me; but the reality infinitely surpassed the idea I had formed, and beggars all description. During the whole way, a distance of six miles, this wretched path presented a series of deep, muddy holes, into which the horses plunged up to the girths at every step, occasionally varied by places where the trunks of trees had been laid down to improve it, but which, soon getting displaced and broken, only served to render it more dangerous. It lies chiefly through a thick marshy forest, and in many places the direct track is wholly impassable, each passenger finding his way as he best can amid the surrounding swamps. I believe no horses but the wonderful little brutes we bestrode could have reached Resht with sound limbs; they picked their way in a most extraordinary manner, seeming to know every inch of the ground they were crossing, and seldom making a false step, save one or two, which met with bad falls from being heavily laden. The muleteers tucked up their wide trowsers to the tops of their thighs, and most actively leaped about in the mud; now hauling up a fallen horse; now assisting the animals, one by one, over some peculiarly bad spot, and incessantly shouting and vociferating at the top of their voices.

About half-way to Resht we crossed, by a narrow bridge constructed of three trunks of trees with cross planks, the river Mongodeh, which is about eight yards wide, flows between deep sandy banks, and falls into the lake a little east of the Peeree Bazar stream. Thus far the Russians got in their

attempt on Resht during the late war: they were led by an Arminian guide; but the impracticability of the road, added to the fire of the riflemen who lined the forest, compelled them to make a retreat with considerable loss. This road is the only one by which almost the whole trade of Gheelaun passes, and many of the merchants of Resht declare that they would willingly put it in repair at their own expense: this, however, the Government will not sanction; and the road is allowed to remain as it is, on that timid and barbarous policy which prevents the amelioration and improvement of communications, lest it should be the means of opening the way for an enemy.

On arriving near Resht, of which nothing was to be seen on account of the trees, we were met by an istakball headed by the son of the Haukim (governor), who conducted us to our quarters, and then left us for the night. Feeling tired and sleepy, we soon retired to rest; that is, we simply got into our beds, which were spread on the floor of our sitting apartment, the retirement being a figure of speech.

CHAPTER VI.

Lodgings.—Hadgee Mohamed Allee.—Hadgee Meer Ismael.—A Persian Connoisseur in Drawing.—Superstition regarding the Pig.—Resht.—Its Population.—Bazar.—Style of the Buildings.—Revenue.—Silk.—Account of the Silk-worm.—Qualities of the Silk.—Mulberry Plantations.—Annual amount of Silk.—Manner of Exportation.—Obtain a Bath.—Pheasant Shooting.—A Wild Beast!—The Jackal.—Eclipse of the Moon.—Fortunate and Unfortunate Days.—Objections to Mr. A.'s Improved Reel.

THE house which had been assigned us was built in the usual style, and situated in a small garden planted with orange-trees. It contained a couple of rooms, one of which served us both for bed-chamber and sitting-room, and the other was occupied by our servants. These apartments were very comfortable in all respects, save that, oiled paper being used in the windows instead of glass, there was scarcely light enough to see to read or write even at mid-day.

The following morning we were visited by a merchant named Hadgee Meerza Mohamed Allee, whom Mr. Fraser mentions as having much contributed to his comfort during his unfortunate stay at Resht in 1822: he had a pleasing and benevolent expression of countenance, and was agreeable in his manners and conversation. He frequently called on us during the remainder of our stay here. Shortly afterwards,

Hadgee Meer Ismael, the Haukim, was announced, accompanied by six or eight of his friends, who ranged themselves on the ground all round the room. The Hadgee was placed in one of our travelling chairs, in which he looked peculiarly unhappy, owing to a mal-adaptation of its size to that of its occupant: it was a rather narrow arm-chair, and, in rising to take leave, he found to his dismay that it still adhered to his person. He immediately commenced an ineffectual struggle for freedom, which he only accomplished by the aid of his attendants. Mr. Fraser was quartered on this person, whom he describes as a very disagreeable fellow, of "grave aspect, very great, and proud-looking;" and is, I think, more happy in this instance than when describing Balla Khan. The Hadgee was a dull, reserved sort of man, though civil and attentive to us. Knowing, indeed, the sentiments with which the generality of Mussulmans regard Europeans, and remembering that Mr. Fraser was forced on him as a guest,—which, perhaps, moreover occasioned him considerable inconvenience,—I think great allowances ought to be made for any surliness he may have displayed on that occasion. The conversation was principally kept up by his friends, who seemed to try which could speak the loudest, and were untiring in their questions regarding our Padishah, England, and the world in general, in most cases displaying a ludicrous and profound ignorance. One old fellow with a comical expression of countenance, who had been silently engaged for nearly an hour in rolling up an opium pill in the palm of his hand,

at last appeared to have fingered it to his entire satisfaction, and then began talking to me in Turkish, in a voice which might have been heard a mile off, though I was sitting close to him. He first asked my name, then whether I was not fond of getting drunk, (Asiatics in general having an idea that all Europeans tipple immoderately,) and he appeared surprised and incredulous when I assured him that such was not my practice. He then took up my sketch-book, and, holding it upside down, said with the air of a man who knows what he is talking about, that the drawings were tolerably well executed; and, pointing to an inverted picture of some sunken ships on Enzellee Lake, commended it as a very correct sketch of the Koolla Frengi, a building at Resht, which he said he recognised immediately. A few minutes afterwards he sunk under the effects of the opium into a pleasant doze, from which he awoke at intervals to roar out some question or observation at the top of his voice, immediately relapsing into oblivion. This loud way of speaking I found very unpleasant, and the middle classes of Persians have almost invariably the habit.

After the departure of these worthies, we visited our horses, which we found miserably out of condition, and much the worse for their fatiguing journey from Enzellee, which they were three days in performing.

We then took a walk along the banks of the river Mongodeh, where in fine weather the inhabitants are fond of promenading. I observed a man bringing a horse to water, accompanied by a wild pig

tamed. This was the first I had seen in the East, and, from the abhorrence in which this animal is held by all orthodox Mussulmans, I felt curious to know why any one should have taken the trouble to domesticate one; I learned, however, that the natives have an idea, that, if one be kept in a stable, any harm that might otherwise happen to the horses would be sure to fall on the pig. I was afterwards told by Persians that the late Russian consul here believed implicitly in this superstition, and, moreover, that but for this preservative he would have been very unlucky in his stable, as the pigs with which he was constantly supplied by the peasants for the safety of his horses were continually disappearing in a most mysterious manner:—the majority of the natives shook their heads, and ascribed it to the malignity of the deeres; but a few, less superstitious, had the ill-nature to insinuate that the consul was fond of pork.

On the 3rd we remained at home to write; and the next day, having dispatched our courier, we sallied forth with the intention of visiting the Haukim, but, not finding him at home, continued our walk through the town.

The name of Resht is spelt with three Arabic characters ر Reh, ش Shin, and ت Teh, the numerical value of which added together denote the year of the Hegira in which the city was founded: thus,

ر	Reh	stands for	200
ش	Shin	„	300
ت	Teh	„	400

giving the 900th year of the

RESHT from the top of the Roolta Feringee

Hegira. The present being 1260, Resht is consequently 360 years old. The town is situated in a plain, which about an hundred years ago was cleared of wood by the Russians, from the sea-shore as far as fifteen miles inland; but it has been since overgrown with a dense jungle of brambles, dwarf alders, and young forest-trees. The houses are scattered here and there in the midst of this vegetation, and from no point are there more than ten or twelve visible at the same time. The lanes and most of the streets are unpaved, often ancle-deep in mud, and seem to have been formed by the constant passage of men and beasts rather than by any effort to make a regular path. When Fraser was here in 1822, the place was in a highly flourishing condition, and he supposed the population to have amounted to between 60,000 and 80,000 souls. The bazars were extensive and well supplied, containing some six hundred shops, and everything betokened a prosperous commercial town. Since then a dreadful plague, which occurred in 1830-31, and destroyed three-fourths of the inhabitants of Gheelaun, occasioned the total depopulation of the town, as those who did not escape to the neighbouring mountains perished; and the succeeding year, though some of the survivors returned, their number did not much exceed a thousand. From that year Resht may be said to have recommenced its existence as a commercial city, and it has since been rapidly increasing in importance and prosperity. At present it contains about 20,000 inhabitants, and its bazars are again becoming the seat of

an active trade. These generally present nothing striking: they are badly paved, badly roofed, and in some parts are in ruins; yet here and there may be seen a goodly row of shops, among which those of dealers in British manufactures, druggists, and confectioners, are the most conspicuous. I was told that there were in all about two hundred, but from my own observation I should think that this estimate might be nearly doubled. An Eastern bazar is composed of long rows of open stalls or shops, where the vender sits in the midst of his wares; and behind each stall is a small storehouse. At night the shops are closed with shutters; and a few men are placed in the passages to guard against robbers.

A couple of months after we left Resht we heard that four caravanserais, part of the bazar, and a considerable quantity of silk and other property, had been destroyed by fire; but the various statements of the damage differed so widely that no correct estimate could be made of its extent.

There are no antiquities, ruins, or public buildings of any kind to attract attention. The houses are in general built of wood and brick, often with an upper story, and covered with a widely projecting roof of red tiles, which give a certain European and picturesque appearance to the place. There are many mosques, but nearly all of them small buildings, having each a short minaret, sometimes rising from the roof, and sometimes standing a little apart from the structure.

Resht is the residence of a Royal Prince, son of

Fath Allee Shah, Yaiyah Meerza, for whose maintenance the revenue of a few villages is appropriated; but he has nothing whatever to do with the administration of affairs, and keeps no state, living quietly and retired, and amusing himself with his harem, his hounds, and his hawks.

The revenue which Government derives from the custom-house here is about 43,000 tomauns; besides this, there is a tax on shops, but the amount is trifling.

The principal article of commerce in Gheelaun is silk, the production of which is now almost entirely confined to this province. Mauzunderoon yields comparatively little; as, during the reign of Nadir Shah, the inhabitants, unable to endure the rapacity and oppression of the local governors, destroyed their mulberry plantations. Considering the size of Gheelaun and its thin population, the production of

this valuable article is important; and, in spite of various disadvantages arising from a vicious administration, the clearing of the forest advances yearly to give place to fresh plantations of the mulberry. The province is one of the richest in the kingdom, and deserves the peculiar care and attention of Government, though little seems to be bestowed on it.

The management of the worm is conducted in a very simple and primitive manner; and it may not be uninteresting to describe the process. For the following account I am indebted, in a great degree, to a paper, published in the *Revue de l'Orient*, by M. Chodzko, late Russian consul at Resht.

About the commencement of April the bags, in which the eggs are preserved during the winter, are exposed to a moderate heat in some shady corner of the house; in general, however, the women carry them under their arms, as the warmest part of the body. The eggs are never exposed to the full heat of the sun, which would scorch and destroy them, and animal heat is preferred. The young worms are placed in any spare pots or pans which will suffice to hold them, and are fed with the leaves of the mulberry chopped into small pieces: if the spring happen to be late, and the worms are hatched before the mulberry is in leaf, the leaves of the coriander are substituted. The worms live for about forty days, during which period they become torpid, or, as the natives say, go to sleep four times; each sleep endures about two days, and the interval between is from seven to ten days. When the insects awake from

their first torpidity, they are removed from the pans in which they have been kept, and are placed in the tilambar.

From this period they are fed with mulberry-leaves, whole branches being placed on the bed on which the worm is reared: their voracity is extraordinary, and after each sleep they become more and more ravenous.

The tilambar is a shed formed of nine or ten trunks of trees stripped of their branches, and driven into the earth in the form of an oblong square. These posts support a roof composed of the branches of trees thatched with rice-straw: the eaves project several feet from the walls, as a protection against the sun and rain. Six or seven feet from the ground, round the shed, a scaffolding about two feet wide is erected, on which the proprietor walks to feed the insects; and, at a little lower level, the whole centre is occupied by a platform which serves as the bed where they remain while they exist as worms. The scaffolding encircling the bed is called the bridge; from which a curtain of rice-straw is suspended, joining the platform, to protect the silk-worms from wind. This, with a ladder to ascend the bridge, completes a tilambar. The walls of the shed are composed of reeds, and have two openings; one of which serves as a door, and the other, on the opposite side, affords the means of ventilation. If the weather happen to be cold,—which, however, is rarely the case,—the place is heated artificially. The ordinary dimensions of a tilambar are about twenty feet long, seventeen or eighteen broad, and

thirteen high: the bed is some five feet from the ground.

On being removed to the tilambar, the silk-worms are placed on a litter of the green branches of the mulberry; and, when the leaves are devoured, fresh boughs are given them without removing the old ones. The bed is not cleansed until it is absolutely necessary, from the collection of old branches, and from the strong effluvium arising from the ordure and the worms which have died. The rubbish is then removed from beneath, and the live worms which fall during the process are carefully replaced. At first, one man usually suffices for the management of a tilambar; he goes into the plantations, cuts the branches, and, mounting the bridge, distributes them to the worms; but after the last sleep the operation becomes more serious, and three or four hands—generally the wife and children of the proprietor, who is himself the manager,—hardly suffice to supply the insects, their demand for food is so great. In wet weather no care whatever is taken to dry the leaves, and consequently sometimes a moiety of the worms sicken and die.

At the expiration of about forty days the worms become of a transparent hue, cease to eat, and exhibit a desire to climb the boughs to form their cocoons. This is a season of universal jubilee to the peasantry of Gheelaun, for now their labour ceases. Indeed, they have every reason to rejoice, as in this damp and hot climate the gathering of the branches is no ordinary toil, and often occasions deadly fevers. Boughs of the elm, alder, and other trees, the leaves

of which the worms never eat, are now placed upright in the bed, their upper extremities being fastened to the cross-beams in the roof, when the insects ascend and begin to spin. The ladder is then taken away, the shed is closed, and all access forbidden during ten days. At the end of this time the proprietor, accompanied by his family and the tax-gatherer, who must be present, enters the tilambar, and, having removed the boughs with which the place is encumbered, they behold the entire roof covered with the beautiful white and yellow cocoons. The tax is levied according to the size of the bed; that is, for every twenty measures from the elbow of the proprietor to the tip of his middle-finger is paid three-quarters of a maun shahee of the raw silk: thus the tax, having reference to the produce may be either heavy or light, according to the favourableness of the season. The total revenue on the production of silk in Gheelaun amounts to between 140,000 and 150,000 tomauns (70,000*l.* and 75,000*l.*) A large tilambar will yield about four mauns shahee (fifty-two pounds) of good silk.

The cocoons are now gathered and given to the women. Those which are to be wound off are either exposed to the sun, or immersed in boiling water, to destroy the chrysalis. Those destined for the reproduction of the species are put into pans made for the purpose, and placed in a cool part of the house, where in process of time the moth starts into life.

A harmless snake, the *coluber aquaticus*, is procured from the rivers and placed in each tilambar

as a tutelar deity. If it does not remain there voluntarily, it is confined in a cage; though I was assured it seldom seeks to leave the place, but ranges about it at large, most probably destroying the vermin which might injure the worms. The proprietor regards the reptile with such reverence, that, if perchance he finds it asleep, he will not venture to awaken it: he believes that a good or bad raccolta depends entirely on its favour; and that, if he should not be able to procure one for his tilambar, the silk will either be coarse, or the worms die, or no purchaser be found. If a man is at enmity with another, the greatest injury he can inflict on him is to kill his snake.

The size of the reel on which the cocoons are wound off is larger than that used for the silk usually imported into England from other countries; consequently it cannot be wound by our ordinary machines, and is less valuable than it would otherwise be. Attempts have been made to persuade the Gheelaunees to use a reel of the proper dimensions; the advantages of their so doing have been explained, and measures of the proper size have been given to them, hitherto, however, with little success. They usually offer two objections: the first is, that their forefathers have from time immemorial used the same reel, and why, therefore, should they presume to change it? The other is, that the lesser reel would occupy more time, which they could not afford, as the country is thinly populated and all hands fully employed. To obviate this, Mr. A. constructed a simple machine, consisting of

a reel of the proper dimensions with two wheels to multiply the motion, to the extent that each turn of the handle would give four evolutions of the reel, and would wind off as much silk as about three turns of the larger reel. It remains to be seen whether the saving of labour, the higher price offered, and the greater demand, will induce them to forego their prejudices and adopt this new reel. Last year, indeed, some two hundred mauns shahee were wound off on short reels; but they were of irregular measures, and thus the trial was abortive.

An experienced rearer of the silk-worm will, by long habit, decide without hesitation which of the cocoons will produce the finest quality of silk; there are some twelve different sorts of them, distinguished by their respective names. The districts of Fomen, Resht, and Lahijan are said to produce the best silk in Gheelaun; some of which will bear comparison with the finest from Broussa. There is also a small quantity of the most beautiful quality equal to the best Italian or Chinese silk; it is not, however, confined to any particular district, but is found and sold among that of ordinary quality. Out of the whole produce of the province, something above 100,000 mauns shahee, there may be about 150 of this silk. A Greek mercantile house purchased this year about 12,000 mauns shahee, out of which was picked three packages of this superior quality. Were it collected and sold separately, it would be worth some twenty tomauns per maun shahee; while that of ordinary quality is only worth from ten to fourteen tomauns. The finest of this

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latter description sells at from fourteen to eighteen tomauns, the variations in price being regulated by the season and the demand.

Mulberry plantations meet the eye at every turn throughout Gheelaun. The tree is raised from seed in the following manner:—The fruit is allowed to ripen on the branches till it falls of itself, when it is crushed into a pulp, and portions put into holes in the earth four inches deep. The superfluous plants are thinned out, so as to leave the rest about three feet apart. Some five or six years are necessary before the leaves can be gathered from the young tree without damaging it. Both the black and white mulberry are employed in the plantations, which are only allowed to grow a little above the ordinary height of a man, for the convenience of gathering the leaves; the stems are stripped of their shoots, but a head is encouraged. The closeness of the trees, and the shade which one affords the other, render the leaves very tender. The trees are carefully pruned every spring, the shoots of the year alone affording the nutriment on which the worms thrive well: the leaves of the old branches are hard and indigestible, and the inequalities of the bark wound the insects.

The annual raccolta in Gheelaun amounts in a moderate season to something more than 100,000 mauns shahee (1,300,000 lbs.) of good silk, in addition to a great portion of waste or of inferior kind, the quantity of which is not ascertained. Some say that it is about half, and some that it is fully as much as the fine.

According to M. Chodzko, the exportation of silk from Gheelaun in 1839 and 1840 was as follows:

		1839.	1840.
To Russia . .	Mauns Shahee	10,134	9,949
To England		29,178	47,568
To Baghdad		3,504	7,750
To the interior of Persia . .		7,638	6,432
	Mauns Shahee	50,454	71,699

Add to these sums 40,000 mauns shahee employed in the manufactures of Gheelaun and Mauzunderoon, and the average of the two years will give about 100,000 mauns shahee. All persons, however, agree that the rearing of the silk-worm has been yearly on the increase, so that the present produce will most probably exceed the above average.

M. Chodzko has made a slight mistake in saying that so much is exported "to England;" it should have been "to Constantinople," whence the silk is dispersed over Europe. I was informed by the gentleman who purchases for the Greek house before alluded to, that more than half of what he sends out of Gheelaun goes to France, and the remainder to England; but that last year the portion which was shipped to England, being unsold there, was afterwards exported to France.

This season the raccolta had not been plentiful, as the unusual heat which prevailed during the spring weakened or destroyed a great quantity of the silk-worms.

The silk for exportation is packed in "ferdehs" or ballots, each supposed to contain six mauns

shahee. For every bale sent by way of Tabreez to Constantinople or the interior, a duty of one tomaun and a half is paid here, but on those shipped to Russia through Enzellee three tomauns are levied. The Russians, however, embale from seven to nine mauns shahee instead of the usual six, and, when the customer complains, they silence him by threatening to take their silk to Tabreez and pay the duty there; which would be so much out of his pocket, as he farms the duty at a fixed price, the excess above which is for his own profit.

It was now the 5th of December: the weather had been lovely since the 1st; yet, as we expected the rains would soon commence in good earnest, we had been making the most of our time in paying visits to the different influential people of the place, and were beginning to feel more at leisure. In the evening we went to a bath, which was obtained with very little difficulty; the only stipulation being that we should come, if possible, after dark. Turkish and Persian baths have been so often described that there needs no repetition here; suffice it to say, that my skin, being somewhat less tough than that of the generality of Persians, was completely scrubbed off in many places, much to my subsequent inconvenience.

The following day we went with a sportsman of the country to shoot pheasants in the direction of the mountains. We had no proper dogs; and the forest and underwood were so dense, that, though we put up about a dozen pheasants, two alone were seen and killed—we merely heard the remainder.

I was consigning one of the dead birds to my game-bag, when the sportsman came to me, and gravely represented, that, if I wished for the least further sport, I should allow him to give the dog the foot of the pheasant. We saw several snipes, and one quail, which my companion killed. During the whole time we were wading in deep clay and water, through a terribly stiff cover of brambles, alders, and fern; the work was most fatiguing, and we soon returned home, thinking that the sport by no means compensated us for the trouble. There are said to be plenty of pheasants, but without several good dogs success is hopeless in such jungle. A considerable number are brought into Resht by the natives, who find out the trees where the birds roost, and, going there after sunset, knock them down with long sticks; some, however, though comparatively few, are killed with shot. In the breeding season the native sportsman ties a common hen to a tree in the jungle, and, concealing himself among the bushes, pulls occasionally a long string attached to the bird's leg to make it flutter; the cock pheasants, if there be any in the neighbourhood, are soon attracted to the spot, and shot by the fowler from his retreat.

To-day a kind of sirocco blew, which they say is often felt here, though more particularly during the hot summer months, when it is much dreaded. While it continues, people are afraid to light fires in their wooden houses, as everything becomes as dry as tinder and disposed to ignition. They also carefully cover up their silk, and close the store-

houses and bazars where it is kept, as they say this wind renders it brittle.

Our little spaniel for several nights had been continually barking and growling; and I thought, moreover, I heard a crunching noise, as of some animal eating bones. I quietly opened the window, and by the light of the moon perceived a thin lank-looking beast, with a long bushy tail, diligently devouring some offal. The moment it perceived me it scampered off; and I supposed it to have been some wild beast, probably a jackal, as I knew they were in the habit of coming into the town, having heard their screaming every night. This evening we determined to solve our doubts regarding the beast, and waited a long time without hearing a sound. At last a slight noise was perceived, and, seizing our guns, we both hastened to the window. The moon shone brightly, but one side of the garden was thrown into deep shade by a high wall. We listened, and presently heard a low, rustling noise, proceeding from a dark corner among the orange-trees, and felt convinced the beast was there. I could not, however, perceive anything moving; so, jumping from the window, I advanced nearer, prepared to take a shot, if the animal ran. At last something moved, and I was on the point of firing, when I was arrested by a tremulous voice, exclaiming, "Sahib! sahib! chee mee koneed?" (Sir,sir, what are you doing?") and one of our servants, who was afflicted with a longing after other men's oranges, and was afraid to discover himself until he saw clearly that I was going to fire into the bush, issued forth as

pale as death, and nearly frightened out of his wits. Had he remained silent two minutes more, I might have shot him. Some hours afterwards, we were told that the beast was in the garden; and once more I crept cautiously to the window. At first nothing was visible; but, in a few minutes, an animal, which I recognised as the same I had before seen, slowly crossed a narrow streak of moonlight, and the next moment was lost again in the impenetrable shade of the wall and orange-trees. I, however, took a chance-shot in the direction in which it had disappeared, and, a loud howl proclaimed my success, "Barikellah! barikellah!" shouted the servants, who had been under the verandah, watching the scene. We all rushed forward to the spot, and found the supposed wild beast, now in the agonies of death, to be an unfortunate dog, who had wandered from some neighbouring house in search of a supper!—We returned in silence, and I afterwards heard that the servants intended to distribute bread to the poor, that my soul might be relieved from the consequences of my mistake; for they believe that, if any one kills a harmless animal without cause, he will be obliged in the next world to pay a penalty of jewels sufficient to fill its skin.

Contrary to all expectation, the weather still continued beautifully fine; and, as the jackals made a prodigious din every night, a further continuance of it was predicted. These animals are said only to cry in fair weather, or when it is about to be so: certainly, while we were at Resht, there was no lack of howling every night; and, after the first day, there

was no rain. We remained at home writing during the day, and towards evening we took a ride along one of the very few practicable roads in the vicinity of Resht; this, however, continued but for about two miles, when it became a miserable track, only a few degrees better than that of Peeree Bazar.

At night there was an eclipse of the moon, and all the pots, pans, and other sonorous instruments which could be found in Gheelaun, were in requisition, to frighten away the beast which was supposed to be devouring the planet. A great deal of gunpowder was also expended; and one might easily have imagined that the town was attacked. Presently our cook, Ismael, commenced a tremendous assault upon a large saucepan; and the other servants discharged their pistols and rifles, much to the assistance of the good cause. At last, after having continued this din for upwards of two hours, the inhabitants retired to rest triumphant, as the beast was effectually alarmed, and had left the moon precisely as he had found it—round, and bright as ever!

On the 10th, we were again visited by Hadgee Ismael, the Haukim, who, having heard that we were going to leave Resht on the morrow, said it was not a lucky day, and that we ought not to proceed. The Persians think that Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are unlucky, but that the others are fortunate; Thursday and Sunday peculiarly so. The Hadgee was accompanied, as usual, by several merchants, his friends; and being himself a considerable silk proprietor, Mr. A. exhibited to him the reel he had constructed for winding off the silk on the proper

measure. It was clumsily made, but sufficed to show, that, if adopted, it would effect a saving both of time and labour, besides rendering the silk more valuable. They raised all sorts of ridiculous objections, and recurred to the old story of "their fathers before them"—that hitherto they had got on very well, and were afraid of losing, by innovations on old customs. Then they objected to the expense of the new machines—a few shillings apiece: in short, when either their money or their prejudices are concerned, all attempts at amelioration seem hopeless, as these people are avaricious and ignorant to the last degree. They departed, however, with vague promises to see what could be done.

The following day was spent in preparations for departure.

CHAPTER VII.

A Fortunate Day.—Departure from Resht.—Nature of the Country.—The Sefeed-rood.—Ferry.—Kesoun.—Road to Lahijan.—Arrival.—My White Hat.—Mahomed Allee Khan.—Lahijan.—Regarding Estimates of Population.—Revenue.—Visit the Governor.—Leave Lahijan.—Old Causeway.—Scenery.—Arrival at Langarood.—Meer Aboo Talib Khan's Summer-house.—Revenue.—Start for the Sefeed-rood.—The Langarood River.—Wild Fowl.—Fish.—Wild Duck Catchers.—A Predicament.—Reach the Sefeed-rood.—Our Quarters.—The Colony of Russian Fishermen.—Particulars of the Fishery.—Caviare.—Dried Fish.—Isinglass.—Rent of the Fishery.—Geography of the Coast.—Rising and Falling of the Caspian.—Picturesque Bridge.—Remains of Elton's Ship.—Boys fishing.

THE morning of the 12th December was misty and damp, and we apprehended rain: Hadgee Mohamed Allee, however, who came to bid us good-b'ye, declared the weather unexceptionable; and, as the day was fortunate, he pronounced authoritatively that there would not be rain.

After a few delays we started, about eleven o'clock. Outside the town we forded the river Mungodeh, and commenced our march on a tolerably good piece of road. We had engaged a guide, who had promised to take us by a dry and generally unfrequented path through the forest, but, on inquiry for him, he was nowhere to be found; so that we were obliged

to press into our service a peasant whom we overtook, but who knew no other than the regular caravan road to Mauzunderoon. This by degrees became worse and worse, and, with the exception of a dry bit here and there, proved little better than that to Peeree Bazar.

We travelled about a fursuck and a half through a swampy forest, with a thick underwood of brambles, alders, and a variety of climbing plants, among which I observed the wild hop, occasionally varied with a mile or two of mulberry plantation, when we crossed a small rivulet called the Nooreh, some five yards broad, and now only a few inches deep. It has not the appearance of ever becoming a large stream; though close to where we forded it was a high bridge of one arch, which, however, did not seem to be much used, being overgrown with rank vegetation. A fursuck further brought us to the village of Koochee Isfahaun, the property of the Haukim of Resht. The houses are scattered about in the forest; and all that was visible was the bazar, consisting of two small rows of shops, between which the road passes.

Continuing onwards over a slightly improved path, we arrived on the banks of the Sefeed-rood at about an hour before sunset. The river at this season is never very large, and, owing to the late dry weather, was not so full as usual; still it was too deep and rapid to ford, and at least one hundred yards across. The bank on which we stood was abrupt; on the other side it was low, and covered with fragments of rocks and trees, marking the course of the wide

and rapid torrent which the river becomes in the spring.

The village of Reshtabad is situated a short distance from the river, though not visible from its banks, being concealed among the trees. Near the water's edge were a couple of small cottages: here a ferryman resided, in whose boat our horses were embarked, five or six at a time; and, when they had all been conveyed across, we ourselves followed. By the aid of long poles the boatmen push up the side of the stream sixty or seventy yards, and then, launching out into the current, are carried down about the same distance before they can reach the shallow water on the other side, thus managing to land nearly opposite the point whence they started.

We had intended to have halted at Reshtabad, but finding the ferry-boat ready, and an hour of daylight still remaining, we thought it better to cross the river this evening, than to wait till the next morning.

Remounting on the other side, we rode a few hundred yards to a row of shops, like those at Koochee Isfahaun, serving as a bazar to the village of Kesoun. Nothing could be seen of the houses, and the only indications of their existence in the vicinity were a few wreaths of smoke curling above the surrounding forest. We soon found very tolerable lodgings in a small house; but owing to the badness of the road, and the intervening river, our baggage did not arrive, so that we had to pass the night on the bare floor, where the abundance of vermin of all sorts prevented our obtaining the least repose.

We rose as soon as it was light; and, feeling unrefreshed and feverish, took our guns, and strolled into the forest, with the double object of killing a pheasant, and invigorating ourselves by the morning air. We had no sport; and as it was foggy, and a heavy dew had fallen in the night, we got nothing but a thorough wetting from the leaves of the trees, and a solitary woodcock, which my friend shot.

Two hours after breakfast our baggage arrived, and we immediately proceeded on the road to Lahijan. This, as usual, lay through alternations of natural forest, mulberry plantations, and rice-fields, and, though at first very bad, gradually became better as we advanced: the country also seemed to improve, being more open, and not such a continual swamp as heretofore.

Having travelled about a fursuck, we crossed two small streams, a few hundred yards distant from each other, by a couple of single-arched bridges built of brick. From this point the road became good and exceedingly picturesque; sometimes hedged in on either side by a magnificent growth of box, which chiefly composed the underwood of the forest, and sometimes opening on a beautiful landscape of cottages, lawns, and cultivation. Another fursuck brought us to the river Shimerood, which, flowing from the mountains, enters the Sefeed-rood near its mouth. We crossed the Shimerood, over a lofty, pointed bridge, built of brick, and seemingly in good repair, having two large centre arches, and two smaller ones on each side. The river flows over a gravelly bed; and though at this season only about sixty

yards broad, and fordable in many places, bears the appearance of becoming a rapid torrent in the spring. For two or three miles we now traversed a more open country, covered with brambles and fern, without any trees, and arrived at another bridge of four arches, similar to that just mentioned, across the river flowing to Langarood, which, I believe, is also called by that name. It is about the same size as the Shimerood, and resembles it in general appearance. Lahijan, about three fursucks (twelve miles) from Kesoun, is situated on the eastern bank, where we were met by the man whom we had sent forward to procure quarters, and who conducted us to them.

On arriving, I hastened to make a sketch of the place; but the houses were so buried in the trees, that I could only get a glimpse of one or two roofs. The scenery around the town is very fine: the mountains, clothed with forest in all the varied beauty of autumnal colouring, rose, one behind the other, in misty succession; the distant back-ground being formed by the highest of the range, whose peaks, covered with snow, were half lost in the clouds. I took a hasty sketch from the extremity of a grassy common, and then, at the suggestion of some heavy drops of rain, made the best of my way back to our lodgings, where I arrived just as our baggage came up.

I found Meerza Mohamed Allee Khan, the Governor, and several of his friends, with my companion. They were all in profound astonishment at a broad-brimmed, grey felt hat which I wore; and previous to my coming into the room, seeing me from the

window near the baggage, had been making inquiries of Mr. A. what manner of man he had for a muleteer, and whether the thing on his head was a hat? A Moollah, however, who was with them, and who had seen us at Resht, told them that it was the other Sahib. "Mashallah! Mashallah!" they exclaimed, "wonderful Sahib—wonderful hat does he wear!"

As soon as they had all departed, the Khan sent us a capital dinner; after which we went to bed and slept soundly, not being annoyed by our implacable enemies, the fleas.

In the morning we received a visit from the Governor, who seemed rather a dull person, though very polite and civil. He asked a great many questions regarding the Feramoosh Khoneh, as they call the Freemasons' Hall in London, which is a complete mystery to all the Persians who have heard of it. Very often the first question we have been asked is, "What do they do at the Feramoosh Khoneh? What is it?" They generally believe it to be a most wonderful place, where a man may acquire in one day the wisdom of a thousand years of study; but every one has his own peculiar conjectures concerning it. Some of the Persians who went to England became freemasons; and their friends complain that they will not tell what they saw at the hall, and cannot conceive why they should all be so uncommunicative.

On leaving us the Khan sent a present of several large trays of sweetmeats, which were devoured by our servants in a most incredible manner.

Lahijan is a very pleasantly-situated town, and, the country being more open and dry than in the vicinity of Resht, the climate is more healthy; and I was told that in case of sickness people often remove hither for the change of air. I saw nothing of the bazars, as during the greater part of our short stay it was raining, and the remainder of our time was fully occupied. That part of the town which we saw on entering consisted of well-built solid brick houses, many having upper stories. They say that the number of inhabitants is about three thousand, though I may remark, once for all, that these estimates of population are not to be considered as established facts: they may sometimes be near the truth, but where there are no accounts or registers kept, and where the female part of the community are seldom seen abroad, all must necessarily be conjecture. Whenever I have noted the amount of population in a place, it has not been a mere guess of my own, but a conclusion formed from the various estimates of those of whom I have inquired on the subject. It is seldom, however, that they know anything of the matter; though they always make a point of not confessing ignorance, and usually give such a reply as they think will please or coincide most with the ideas of the inquirer. Thus, you ask a Persian what is the population of a place: very often he answers, "Busseeor est," (it is many); showing pretty clearly that he knows nothing about it. On pressing him more closely he will perhaps reply, "It is three thousand." "Oh!" you say,

"that is very little for a place like this; there must surely be more." "Belli, bèlli," (Certainly,) is the answer; "there must be altogether six thousand:" and turning to any one who may be standing near, "See how the Sahib knows everything better than even we ourselves, Mashallah!" Thus, at your suggestion, immediately doubling the amount, with as little hesitation as he would have halved it had you observed that you thought it too large.

The revenue of the district of Lahijan amounts to about 40,000 tomauns, including the customs of the town, some 5,300 tomauns.

About two o'clock we mounted our horses and proceeded to take leave of the Governor, whom we found seated in a lofty divan-khoneh, open, and supported in front by two square wooden pillars tapering towards the top and ornamented with a nondescript sort of capital; a style of architecture to be met with in almost every audience-hall of these provinces. We remained but a few minutes, and then departed for Langarood in a drizzling rain.

The road lay over the remains of an old stone causeway, which I took to be the first we had seen of the famous work of Shah Abbas. The pavement was composed of square blocks of stone, and large boulders, broken up and interspersed with deep holes full of mud, forming a path most painful and injurious to the horses, and which in any other country would have been deemed perfectly impracticable.

Had the weather been fine, we should have been delighted with the scenery. The hills rose abruptly on our right, intersected by deep ravines, and covered with forest from which occasionally peeped forth grey masses of stone. Here we came upon a rivulet, now dashing and foaming in cascades over the disjointed rocks; now gliding silently amid the dark and luxuriant vegetation, which almost concealed it from the view: and there in some sequestered nook stood an old Imaumzadeh, its curious pinnacled roof overgrown with moss, and half-buried among the trees.

After travelling along the foot of the mountains for about eight miles, we turned towards the sea, over a flat country cleared for the cultivation of rice. The road still continued in the shape of a causeway through the swamps; but it had been repaired in many places, and a few hundred yards from Langarood had been substantially reconstructed with stones and brick.

The evening had now closed; and after a wet and tedious ride we entered Langarood, and were conducted to a small house which had been cleared for our reception. We had scarcely dismounted when the Governor, Meerza Summud Khan, came to pay us a visit of welcome. He had very little to say for himself, save that he hoped we should be comfortable—that the town was now our own, and we might do with it as we felt most inclined—that between his property and ours there was no difference; in short, he was nothing more than our most humble servant, and only asked for a corner

where he might sit and enjoy the sunshine of our favour. All this was very cheerful, and we requested that out of so much wealth a little wood might be forthcoming to light a fire, as we were wet and shivering. There appeared, however, to be some little difficulty in procuring any, though the place was situated in a forest; at last, however, it did come, and the Khan departed amid fresh protestations of regard, which appeared shortly afterwards in the more substantial form of dinner and a present of sweetmeats.

Langarood is one of the most picturesque towns I ever saw, and, were there a drier climate and a less swampy country around it, would be a delightful residence. Unfortunately this is the most unhealthy spot in all Gheelaun; the marshes which surround it, combined with the dreadful heats of summer, render it at that season almost uninhabitable, and the richer people retire to Lahijan or the neighbouring mountains. In Hanway's time it was the same; and he remarks, that as Gheelaun was accounted the sink of Persia, so Langarood was considered the sink of Gheelaun. The bazars are neither extensive nor attractive, consisting of a few rows of wretched sheds, and the street in which they stand being deep in mud. There are, however, some excellent well-built brick houses, and among the trees stands conspicuous a circular summer-house, of three stories high, surmounted by a dome, belonging to Meer Aboo Talib Khan, the lessee of the fisheries of Enzellee and the Sefeed-rood; it is of wood, and was constructed

by the Russians in his employ. At this time it was undergoing some repairs. The interior was beautifully decorated with those brilliant paintings of wreaths and bouquets of flowers in which the Persians so much excel, and the windows were tastefully formed in fancy patterns of stained glass. We could not see the uppermost room, as the ladies had taken refuge there while the workmen were employed in the lower apartments.

The river of Langarood is about thirty yards broad, and is crossed by two bridges; one a very lofty and curious old brick structure with two large pointed arches, and the other merely of wood. The banks are shaded by fine forest-trees, or lined with gardens and enlivened by many really elegant houses; while the number of small boats continually passing and repassing, the people on the quay loading and unloading the larger ones employed between the coast and the town, give animation to a scene which, as far as the picturesque is concerned, I have rarely seen equalled.

The revenue derived from the custom-house at Langarood is said to amount to between 1500 and 2000 tomauns. Some Russian goods are brought here direct from Astrachan, and a considerable quantity of rice from Mauzunderoon, the crops not having been very abundant in Gheelaun during the last few years.

We wished much to have seen the fishery of the sturgeon at the Sefeed-rood, and, when at Resht, had been told that the best way was to go by water from this place; though we found afterwards that we

should have saved both time and trouble by going from Resht direct to the mouth of the river, and thence to Lahijan or Langarood. After breakfast, having made the necessary arrangements for staying a day there, our party embarked in four small flat-bottomed canoes, each managed by two men; and, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, we left Langarood and proceeded down the stream. We carried with us our guns, bedding, and cooking apparatus; and were accompanied by our Meerza, the cook, two servants, and the man who had been sent with us by Mohamed Ameen Khan from Resht as our Mehmandar.

The river was low, and at this season there is no perceptible current. The mouth near the sea is almost choked up by a sandbank, which acts as a dam, and always keeps the water in the bed up to a certain level: what flows into the sea and the neighbouring swamps, or is exhausted by evaporation, is supplied by the stream from the mountains. The river has the appearance of a broad and almost stagnant ditch, except in the spring, when the water rises about five feet above the winter level. For a mile from the town the banks are wooded, and dotted with cottages; these gradually disappear, and are succeeded by a flat swampy country covered with high reeds and bulrushes. We started north, but by degrees turned due east till within a short distance of the sea, when the stream is divided into two branches, one flowing towards the sandbank at its mouth, and the other turning into an extensive moordaub (dead water) formed in the same manner

as the lake of Enzellee, and separated from the sea by a long narrow strip of sand. This is the channel used by boats from the town; they cross part of the moordaub, and find their way into the sea through an opening in the bank where there is a sufficient depth of water. We had been paddling for two hours before we reached this point, and the distance was about two fursucks. Having entered the lake, we proceeded across it in a northerly direction. Quantities of wild fowl were sporting among its reedy islands,—swans, wild geese, ducks, widgeon, and pelicans; but we were unable to approach any of them. We passed several boats, the owners of which were busily employed in fishing. One man had filled his skiff with four different kinds of fish: some enormous carp (called "hapoor"), bream, sefeed-mahee, and a kind of fish I had never before seen, called the "sevideh;" it was long, dark-blue on the back, and covered with silvery scales on the belly; no spots; the snout was rather pointed, and its jaws furnished with most formidable rows of teeth.

After crossing the moordaub, which in general is not more than two feet deep, we entered a narrow ditch varying from three to six feet, and bordered by reeds between eighteen and twenty feet high. Along this we continued for some miles, when we came to a series of ponds divided by banks of reeds; among which were several small huts belonging to the wild-fowl catchers, whose nets were suspended in every direction, and the decoy-birds near them kept up a continual quacking. Numbers of ducks

were flying round about, though they were cautious not to approach too near our boats.

We now arrived at a narrow causeway, though whither it led was by no means clear; over this we hauled our boats, and, having launched them again on the other side, entered a second large moordaub just as the sun disappeared behind the mountains. After paddling about an hour and a half, we entered another reedy ditch, and the boatmen declared that they had lost their way; we turned back, and after a great deal of shouting came upon the hut of one of the duck-catchers, from whom having inquired the direction we resumed our progress. We were now assured that the Sefeed-rood was not far distant, and were congratulating ourselves on the prospect of a speedy release from our cramped position in the bottom of the narrow canoes, when we stuck fast in the mud, and our guides said that most probably the ditch along which we had been paddling was quite dry a little further on, and they did not know how we could proceed. This intelligence was by no means agreeable: the night was dark, the air cold, and a heavy dew was falling; a wide swamp was on every side of us; and, to add to the comfort of passing a night in such a situation, the nummuds on which we were sitting were beginning to be soaked through by the leaking of the boat. After many ineffectual efforts at moving forwards, the men got out and with some difficulty dragged the canoes a short distance, when to our great relief a sufficient depth of water was found to float them, and a few hundred yards more brought us to a small fall of

about four feet into the Sefeed-rood. Here we were obliged to disembark while the boats were let down, which was soon done; and a quarter of an hour afterwards we reached our destination. We were very kindly received by the Russian fishermen, who conducted us to a lodging, and having supplied us with caviare, fresh bread, butter, and other necessaries, left us to ourselves till the next morning.

We found our apartment was the lower chamber of a tall wooden building erected by the Russians for their employer, Meer Aboo Talib Khan; it consisted of four stories, and commanded an extensive view of the surrounding country. The lower compartment was divided into two small rooms, one of which we occupied; it had five windows, a large Russian stove in one corner, and was lined with canvas painted in stripes of green, blue, and white; but though the embellishments and interior arrangements could not correctly be termed elegant, and the place possessed a very indescribable odour, nevertheless it proved warm and comfortable, and was infinitely preferable to a night in the marsh.

The river is about seventy or eighty yards broad; and, at this season, runs quietly and smoothly between its clayey banks, which it does not appear often to overflow. The water, however, might rise three or four feet without this taking place. The number of Russians who remain here permanently is but small, as the settlement does not consist of more than thirty huts, and half a dozen storehouses thatched with reeds. During the months of February, March, and April, however, which is the

season for taking the sturgeon, a reinforcement of some 300 men arrive from Astrachan to assist at the fishing.

In the beginning of February they catch about 100, and towards the end of the month from 600 to 800 per day. In March, the number increases from 800 to 2,000; and, during April, they take between 3,500 and 3,800 a day. The larger number, however, is only caught for about fifteen days previous to the rising of the river, when the ships depart with the produce. The few families which are left during the remainder of the year still continue to fish, though chiefly for their own consumption, taking from four to eight fish a day. After the month of May, little or no roe is found in them.

The superintendent of the fishery was very obliging, and explained to us the whole process of curing the roe and fish; and, as we expressed a desire to see the manner of fishing, he ordered out a boat, and we witnessed the capture of several.

Across the river a long line is extended, to which at intervals of about a foot and a half are attached other lines two feet in length, each having a strong and slightly barbed hook at its extremity. The weight of these sinks the rope below the surface of the water, but a number of cork or wooden floats support it; so that the hooks just touch the ground when the lines to which they are fixed are kept stretched. The sturgeon generally swims near the bottom, when passing through the lines he is pricked by a hook, upon which he makes a plunge, and is

caught by two or three of those nearest to him: the more he struggles, the more inextricably he entangles himself. A couple of fishermen are stationed at the end of the line in a boat, and, on seeing the disturbance of the water, they haul hand over hand along the rope until they reach the fish; when one of them, striking a large hook into it, draws its head out of the water to the side of the boat, while his companion dispatches it with several blows of a heavy wooden mallet. The lines are placed across the river from its mouth to a half a mile from the sea. In the early part of the season, one boat suffices for a line; but, when the catch becomes more abundant, each line employs two boats. Lines are likewise placed in the sea across the mouth of the river. The fish are taken as they ascend the stream to deposit their spawn.

The method of curing is as follows:—The fish being split, the roe and the substance which forms the isinglass are taken out, and the body is carried to a separate storehouse, where it is salted, arranged in layers, and where it remains until shipped.

The isinglass is prepared by being simply hung up to dry in the sun.

The roe is cured for exportation by being immersed in a strong brine, where it remains for two hours, during which it is continually stirred. The mixture is then allowed to settle, when the roe having risen to the surface is taken out, and rubbed through a strong coarse sieve to cleanse it from any fleshy or gristly matter which may have been cut accidentally from the fish. The roe is afterwards submitted to

a strong pressure in small bags of matting to get rid of the water. The process thus completed, the roe is stowed away in casks, under the name of caviare.

The storehouse in which the dried fish were kept contained about 800, the whole produce of the fishery since the departure of the vessels in May last. We were informed that the number of fish taken in a tolerably good year amounted to about 125,000,* which, in their salted state, sell at Astrachan for from three to five kurrauns (shillings) per poot.

About 250 poots of the isinglass are produced, fetching between thirty and thirty-five tomauns per poot.

The caviare casks contain forty poots each, and the annual number amounts to 300 or 350. It is sold in Russia for about two tomauns per poot.

When the caviare is intended for immediate use, it is merely washed clean, and steeped in salt and water for half an hour.

There are three species of sturgeon, besides some other fish from which the roe is taken to make caviare; but all the different kinds are mixed up in the same vat. The colour before preparation is precisely the same as it is afterwards, being generally of a greenish black; but there are some few fish that yield roe of a lighter hue, which is kept separate for presents to great people, being esteemed on account of its rarity, but not for any peculiar flavour.

* See Appendix (A).

The salt consumed here is brought in large blocks from the Turcoman coast, and is kept in a separate store, in which is a machine for crushing it.

The statements regarding the rent which Meer Aboo Talib Khan pays to the Persian Government vary materially, but I believe that it is something near 3,000 tomauns per annum. On account of the insecurity of everything Persian, he has become a Russian subject, and nearly all the people connected with the establishment are Russians.

Finding the object of our inquiry attained, and the place possessing no further interest, we left it at twelve o'clock on our return to Langarood, where we arrived about seven in the evening.

The geography of the coast hereabouts has been in some maps laid down very erroneously. In Colonel Monteith's, the coast from the mouth of the Sefeed-rood lies north and south to the mouth of some imaginary branch of this river, which with it forms a large delta; from this point, the coast is represented as running south-east to the Langarood river, and the town stands on the sea-shore. Now, from the mouth of the Sefeed-rood, the coast lies nearly north and south to the Langarood river; the town is situated about eight miles from the sea; and there is no branch of the Sefeed-rood that I could see or hear of as laid down in the map alluded to. In an old map, by John Elton, to be found in Hanway, the coast and situation of Langarood are laid down much more correctly, and a succession of long narrow islands are marked along the shore which have since probably joined together and formed the

strip of sand dividing the moordaubs from the sea. This may have been occasioned by a receding of the Caspian, which, as in the time of Hanway, is said to advance and retreat every thirty years. At this period we were told that it was receding.

17th. We deferred our departure, to allow our horses another day to recruit; and in the afternoon we embarked in a small boat and went a few miles up the river, enjoying the peculiarly soft and delicious temperature of the air, and the beautiful scenery which presented itself at every turn.

The bridge near the town is a pleasing object; its high pointed arches seeming to reach almost within a span of the parapet, and giving it a very light and picturesque appearance. It is of some age, if one may judge by the decomposition of the bricks, though the bridge itself is still in good repair.

We had been making inquiries for the remains of the ship built by Captain Elton for Nadir Shah, which we were told was to be seen in one of the moordaubs near the shore. The boatmen who took us to the Sefeed-rood said they knew nothing about it; but, to our mortification, we heard to-day that we had passed close to it, or, at least, to the remains of a vessel which was probably the one in question. It would have been an interesting sight.

On returning home, I observed several little boys sitting under the bridge, fishing with the rod and line. The rod was a reed, and the float a small piece of rush tied to the line; the hooks were Rus-

sian: and they had caught a quantity of small roach. I do not remember having seen anything in the East which reminded me so strongly of home as these ragged urchins fishing under the shade of the bridge.

CHAPTER VIII.

Leave Langarood.—Arrival at Rood-i-sir.—An Accident.—Rood-i-sir.—Hidden Treasure.—Game.—Description of Gheelaun.—Departure from Rood-i-sir.—Scenery of the Coast.—Rivers forded during the day.—Snares for Pheasants.—Gipsies.—Arrive at Surimroo.—Curious Patten.—Precautions against Wild Beasts.—Aub-i-gherm.—Leave Surimroo.—Rivers.—Azad-mahee Fishery.—The Azad-mahee.—Zuvvar.—Curious Fire-place.—Leave Zuvvar.—Ussuf Sultaun.—Reach Abbas-abad.—Wild Boar.—Abbasabad.—Continue our Journey.—Rivers along the Coast.—A Bear.—Arrive at Kerparoo.—Districts of Tennacorben, Kellauristauk, and Coojoor.—Departure.—Scenery.—Wild Fowl.—Rivers along the Coast.—Arrival at Serrordin Kellau.—Vain attempts to obtain a Lodging.—A Mistake, and the Consequences.—Method of Stacking Rice.

We left Langarood at half-past nine o'clock. Not a cloud obscured the brightness of the morning, and a deliciously cool breeze promised a pleasant ride. The road, sometimes dry and sometimes deep in mud, lay as usual through alternate intervals of swampy forest, rice-fields, and mulberry plantations. After about an hour's travelling, we arrived at a small branch of the river Shalmon, now a mere rill trickling over its pebbly bottom, but, when full, about fifteen yards wide. We continued along its bed until we came to the main stream, which we

forded, and then passed through a village of the same name, situated on its banks. The Shalmon has its rise in the mountain of Sammon, one of the loftiest peaks of the Elburz range along this part of the coast: the river was at this season about sixty yards wide, and not more than a foot and a half deep.

A short distance further, over a wretched pathway, we crossed the small river Bellisar, the boundary of the district of Rawneckoo; and then passing through a large village of that name, and after fording another small intermediate stream, came to the Kia-rood, over which there is a lofty brick bridge in good repair.

On entering the village of Rood-i-sir, our halting-place, an awkward accident happened to our Jellowdar (head groom). This man, who carried a Koordish spear, which is pointed at the nether extremity for the convenience of sticking it in the ground, put his horse into a canter, and endeavoured to strike a large dog which had attacked one of our greyhounds. Missing the dog, the point stuck in the earth, and, his horse galloping onwards, the lower end of the spear entered the socket just above the eye. He immediately fell from his horse, and I thought the weapon had penetrated his brain; however, he soon recovered, and, on examining the wound, we found the eye untouched. He mounted again, and rode to our quarters; and, with the aid of our head servant, who pretended to some skill in medicine, was cured in about a fortnight, though for many days he suffered great pain.

The distance between Langarood and Rood-i-sir is a little more than eight miles, which we travelled in about two hours and a half, arriving at twelve o'clock. In the course of the afternoon we strolled into the village, which exactly resembles others which have been before described. It consists of about an hundred families, and boasts a few wretched shops, designated a bazar.

During the course of our stroll we came upon a green, where were some curiously carved stones and brickwork rising above the turf, apparently the tops of arches. We were informed by our guide that a spell-bound treasure was concealed in these vaults until last year, when an Indian Dervish arrived, who, having performed some incantations and broken the charm, entered the place, and found several pans full of gold coins, which he carried off. The hole by which he made his entrance was pointed out, but it was too much choked with rubbish to admit of our doing the same. There is much treasure buried in Persia, as the custom prevails so universally among the wealthy; but a superstitious dread prevents people from searching for it, as they affirm that a finder of hidden gold is never prosperous.

We continued our walk to the sea-shore, which was covered with the tracks of the wild hog; but, though we beat the bushes for some time, we could not rouse one. On our way home, we entered the skirts of the forest, and flushed a great many woodcocks and a few pheasants.

In Taulish and Gheelaun nearly all the guns in

the hands of the peasantry have flint-locks, but here I frequently observed match-locks.

Rood-i-sir, which is as well the name of a district as of a village, is the last in Gheelaun. Before leaving it, I will say a few words regarding the present condition and administration of the province.

The name is appropriately derived from "Gheel," mud. Some twenty years ago it was populous and flourishing; but the plague of 1831 left insufficient hands to cultivate the ordinary quantity of rice, and to rear as many silk-worms as the mulberry plantations would feed. More than half the present population, which is said to amount to 100,000 souls, are strangers, chiefly from Khalkhal, a district on the other side of the mountains, who are now, however, gradually becoming naturalized; and the province is yearly increasing in wealth and production.

The administration is conducted in the most disorderly manner. The Wallee, Mohamed Ameen Khan is a complete imbecile, and cannot make his authority respected; and when, a short time ago, he was at Tehraun on the point of being superseded, the principal men, afraid that a more active person might be appointed who would take the affairs of the country into his own hands, bribed the prime minister with the sum of 2,800 tomauns, and Mohamed Ameen Khan was confirmed in his government. Every district has now its own self-appointed Haukim, generally the richest and most influential landholder; each of whom, one after the other, has

obtained from the Vizier a firman or order prohibiting any interference with him or his district. Some time since the Russian Consul had occasion to complain to the Wallee of a grievance, who sent a ferosh to the Haukim of the place to enforce redress:—the ferosh received a severe bastinado! "What can I do?" said the Wallee, "I cannot interfere." Under this state of things, a governor must necessarily be a mere cypher; and, even were he resolved to put matters right, he would find that he did not possess the power. These petty chiefs and the rich landed proprietors have by their extortion reduced the peasantry to the last degree of poverty; and, while the former grow yearly more and more wealthy, the poor ryot is left with scarcely the common necessaries of life.

The revenue of Gheelaun amounts to 200,000 tomauns, and is principally derived from the silk; by far the greater part is actually remitted to the treasury in hard cash, and the remainder goes, I believe, to pay the salaries of a few of the Government *employés* connected with the province. Independent of this, between 40,000 and 50,000 tomauns are sent annually to Tehraun in the form of presents and bribes. The salary of the Wallee is 6,000 tomauns, half of which is for the expenses of his table.

Among the vegetable productions are great quantities of wild hops, which are not converted to any use. Hemp also grows wild, and is used in making ropes for packing the silk. It is called "Kenef," and sells at from two to two and a half

kurrauns per maun-tabreez (six and a half pounds). Rice is produced in abundance; but a great deal is likewise imported from Mauzunderoon, and with fish forms the usual food of the native peasantry. The silk has been alluded to.

The climate is hot and wet, and the extent of rice cultivation artificially laid under water, added to the natural marshes, converts the lower part of the province into one universal swamp; so that, during the intense heat of summer, fevers, agues, and other diseases of a dangerous nature prevail, and all the inhabitants who have it in their power retire to the yeilauks among the mountains.

We rose with the sun, and, leaving Rood-i-sir, continued our journey at about half-past eight. Just outside the village we forded the river Norood, about fifteen yards wide, running over a sandy bed, between high and thickly wooded banks, and after about half an hour's ride came to the sea-shore, along which the road lay during the remainder of the day's march. The scenery along these shores of the Caspian is usually of the same character,—a narrow strip of sand, bordered on one side by the sea, and on the other by a belt of forest, beyond which is a level, sometimes wooded and sometimes cleared, backed by a range of high forest-clad mountains, the loftier summits of which are bare and at this season covered with snow.

During the day we forded the following rivers in succession,—the Yarason, Pool-i-rood, Gauzerood, Larthijan, Mauzerood, Sirkerreh-rood, Hassanabad, Oosiaun, Meeaundeh-rood, Serkhonee, Atcherood,

and the Toorparoo, besides thirty-one small nameless streams, which were now mere trickling rills, though their dry beds were sometimes twenty yards across. Of the rivers just enumerated the Pool-i-rood, the Sirkerreh-rood, the Meeaundeh-rood, and the Toorparoo are the largest; the summer bed of the last mentioned being about two hundred and thirty yards broad. The Meeaundeh-rood, or, as it is sometimes called, the Sefeed Tamesh, separates Gheelaun and Mauzunderoon, dividing the district of Rood-i-sir from that of Tennacorben. There were a great many large boulders, roots, and trunks of trees strewed along the shore at the mouth of this river, which when full is both deep and rapid.

Our road occasionally turned off the sands over turf half covered with brushwood, among which the peasantry had set snares for pheasants, woodcocks, and other birds, in the following manner. They fix rows of short sticks in the ground, and interweave them with twigs and grass, so as to form a low wattled fence about a foot high. In this a small opening is left, across which is bent a pliant stick with a horse-hair noose at the extremity; this stick is held down in a curved position by a strong peg on the opposite side of the opening: the bird, in endeavouring to pass through this, runs its head into the noose, and, in struggling, releases the bent stick, which springing up draws the noose tight and strangles the bird. The ground in some places was literally covered with these diminutive hedges, and, before I was told their use, I could not conceive for what they were intended, as the bent stick

and noose, which would have suggested the idea of a snare, were totally concealed by the dry leaves and twigs scattered over and about them. The birds are said never to jump over them, but always to try the opening.

We passed several tents belonging to gipsies, who employ themselves in making the heads of calleoons of pear and other wood, and also various implements used by the women in spinning.

The day was very hot, and, after a long and fatiguing ride of about seven fursucks, we came to the small village of Surimroo, where we obtained tolerable lodgings for ourselves; but there was no comfortable place for the servants, who had to remain all night in an open shed.

We found only women and a few old men in the village; the younger portion being absent with Ussuf Sultaun, the Naïb or deputy of Habeboollah Khan, Governor of the district.

The women belonging to the house in which we were established did not seem to have the least objection to show their faces, but assisted in getting everything ready for our accommodation: two of them were girls between sixteen and twenty, and by no means ugly. I saw here a curious kind of patten: it was made of a flat piece of wood about the size of the foot, with two cross pieces underneath to raise it above the mud; and on the top was fixed a small wooden peg or button, which is placed between the first and second toes, and thus the patten is kept on the foot. I have seen very similar pattens in England used in dyehouses, but never the same

method of holding them on. I observed also a great quantity of little thatched huts raised on wooden pillars about four feet from the ground, into which the sheep and goats were hoisted every night as a protection from the wild beasts; there were also similar lodgings for the poultry. I afterwards found these precautions generally adopted throughout Mauzunderoon, which is much more infested with wild animals than Gheelaun.

The village of Aub-i-gherm (hot water), so called from its hot springs, is situated about two miles off, nearer the mountains. We did not visit this place, but were told that there were three springs, one abundant and two less copious; the former the hottest of the three; that the water was clear and colourless, and not used by the natives internally, but merely for bathing.

20th Dec. The morning was stormy and rainy, and on referring to the thermometer we found a difference of ten degrees in the temperature since yesterday. We left Surimroo at a quarter past nine, and, crossing a small river of the same name, proceeded along the beach. A strong cold wind blew, causing a heavy sea on the Caspian, and the coast presented a broad edge of foam.

Immediately after passing the river Surimroo, the land between the shore and the mountains appeared to sink much lower than the level of the sea; and, with the exception of the invariable belt of forest along the coast, most of the country was cleared and employed in rice cultivation.

During our march we crossed the following

streams,—the Bor-i-shee, Noosaroo, Kiarleherroo, Sheer-i-rood, Vaushek, Shahlekellau, Mazzur, Teel-i-rood, Oukillisar, and another, the name of which I could not ascertain; of these the Sheer-i-rood is the largest and deepest; the Noosaroo and the Kiarleherroo come next in size; but all are considerable rivers in the summer, though at present they do not contain much water; besides these mentioned were sixteen smaller streams.

On the rivers Sheer-i-rood and Mazzur (which may perhaps be the Mazarus of Pliny) are fisheries of the azad-mahee, rented by Ussuf Sultaun, Habeboollah Khan's Naïb or lieutenant, for about three hundred tomauns. The fish are caught all the year round, either in weirs, or with a long-handled three-pronged fork; but the principal seasons are during the spring and autumn, when sometimes as many as ten horse-loads a day are taken. The fishermen are all Persians, no Russians being stationed at any of these rivers.

On the sands at the mouth of the Mazzur we found some men, with forks in their hands, and their shalwars rolled up to their thighs, watching for the fish, which were occasionally thrown by the surf into shallow water; they speared one while we were there, weighing about sixteen pounds, which we bought for a kurraun (a shilling): in the season two or three such fish sell for the same sum. The azad-mahee is generally considered as the salmon of the Caspian; but from the following description of the fish we purchased, which I accurately examined, those learned in such matters will, I think,

agree with me that it is rather a species of lake trout. They are only found along this coast, where the numerous rivers render the water almost fresh. I have seen precisely similar fish in Lough Neagh in Ireland, which are there called "Dullaghans," and grow to a large size. The fish in question measured thirty-eight and a half inches from the tip of the snout to the extremity of the tail; its girth at the rise of the back-fin, which was nineteen inches from the snout, was fifteen inches; it had two fins near the gills, two in the centre of the belly, and one behind the vent-fin on the back, and the small thick fin near the tail common to all trout and salmon; the tail was rounded; the fish was marked irregularly with dark brown and red spots; the colour on the back was of a dirty olive-green shade, blending on the sides into a beautiful roseate tint, which towards the belly became of a golden hue; the jaws were not so pointed as those of the salmon, and the head was altogether more rounded. The fish was full of roe. All the azad-mahee I have seen have been of this kind, with one exception, which I saw afterwards at Saree, where for the first time I recognized what I believed to be a real salmon: the colour on the back was dark blue, merging into a silvery tint on the sides and belly; and it was marked with dark spots, though I think more thickly than our common salmon. The people called this fish also azad-mahee, but it was evidently a different species from the rest, and when cooked was very much superior in flavour and more highly coloured: thus the salmon is found in the

Caspian, though, I fancy, in comparatively small numbers, the greater part of those so called being the large trout just described. It is possible, however, that at this season the salmon were in the salt-water, which would account for our not finding any; and they may perhaps be plentiful at the period when they resort to the rivers.

After passing the Mazzur it began to rain heavily, and we made the best of our way to Zuvvar, a small village five fursucks from Surimroo, situated inland about half a mile from the shore, where, with a little difficulty, we found pretty tolerable lodgings.

In our room was a rather curiously constructed fire-place. In one of the walls, on the same side as the door, were pierced two circular holes about four inches in diameter, three feet from the ground, and the same distance apart. Between these, and against the wall, was a small solid square of hard mud, at the foot of which the fire was placed in a hole made in the floor for its reception. Some five feet above this was a projecting shelf about four feet broad to prevent the smoke ascending, which, from the draught created by the open door, was supposed to escape through the above-mentioned holes; in the present instance, however, owing perhaps to the high wind, it was a lamentable failure, and, after having been nearly suffocated, we were obliged to order the fire to be removed. Above our apartment there was a loft, which was reached by means of an upright pole, with pieces of wood nailed to it at intervals to serve as steps.

Dec. 21st. After a restless and uncomfortable

night, being almost driven mad by the vermin, we rose early and hastened our preparations for departure. The thermometer was at 37° Fahr., a difference of 21° in two days, but the morning was most lovely; not a cloud obscured its brightness, the hoar-frost glittered on the foliage, and all nature seemed to feel the delightful change from the rain and wind of the previous day.

We left Zuvvar at nine o'clock, and, crossing a small stream near the village, once more continued our route along the shore. The scene here, too, was changed: instead of foam and breakers, the sea was calm as a mill-pond; and, save the occasional splash of some huge sturgeon gambolling on the surface, not a ripple disturbed its tranquil bosom, which appeared like a vast sheet of glass.

About two miles from the village we crossed the river Izzarood, where there is a fishery of the azad-mahee, and soon afterwards came to the banks of the Neshtarood, where we found Ussuf Sultaun with a body of men just preparing for a march. On dismounting we were shown into a small cottage, where sat the gentleman in question, a sharp-looking, shrivelled-up little man, but having withal rather a pleasant expression of countenance. He received us very politely, and in the course of conversation, on asking him what he was doing here with his troops, he replied that "he was merely collecting men to be sent to Enzellee and Resht," several small parties of whom we had already met on the road. On taking leave, Ussuf Sultaun sent a horseman with us as far as Abbasabad, about seven miles from

Zuvvar, where we arrived, having first crossed the river Passandeh and another nameless stream.

About an hour after our arrival we strolled into the forest with our guns, to see if we could find any of the various game with which it was said to abound. We had not gone far before the guide who was with me started a wild boar; the animal darted into a thicket, and I hastened off in the direction I thought it probable he might take. We beat about for some time without success, and I was about to turn back, when I heard a noise behind me as of an animal forcing its way through the branches, and turning round saw a huge boar standing on the brink of the thicket about ten yards off. Just as I raised my gun, which was loaded with ball, he bounded across the opening, and I pulled the trigger: the next instant he was lost among a quantity of alder-bushes. I immediately followed, but could not find a trace of him, the ground being so swampy that any foot-mark filled up as fast as it was made. During the afternoon I started several pigs, but could not get another shot, the jungle where I found them being so excessively close. We saw also a good many woodcocks and a few pheasants, but the same cause prevented our having much success.

Abbasabad, belonging to Ussuf Sultaun, is a very insignificant place, consisting of fifty or sixty wretched little mud hovels, but is pleasantly situated on a fine open space covered with green sward, not more than two hundred yards from the sea-shore. The scenery towards the mountains is remarkably picturesque, and the country much more open than

that of Gheelaun it is laid out in rice-fields, which at this season, when at a short distance, appear like stubble-fields, though on nearer approach they are found to be so many deep swamps terribly fatiguing to the horses.

Dec. 22. The morning was cloudy, but we did not anticipate rain: the thermometer was 49° Fahr. We left Abbasabad at eight o'clock, and continued our journey along the sands in a direction E. by S. During the day's march we forded the following rivers, of which the Nummuck-aub-rood is the largest; the Asp-i-chai, Lauzabad, Teel-i-rood, Palenga-rood, Kellaroobad, Nummuck-aub-rood, No-rood, Roodpesht, Serd-aub-rood, Chalous, Kerparoosah; besides seventeen other small streams, some of which I fancy must be branches from one or other of the larger rivers. Near the Teel-i-rood I observed some very fine box wood, and during the greater part of our ride the underwood of the forest was chiefly of this tree. Not far from the Roodpesht I perceived a bear on the sands, which at the same time saw me and made slowly for the cover: calling out to my companion, I put my horse to a gallop, and, keeping along the edge of the forest under cover of some alders, endeavoured to cut him off. I came up with him a few yards from a dense thicket of box, into which he plunged, while I was vainly attempting to draw my pistol, which had got entangled in the shawl I wore round my waist.

After travelling five and a half fursucks, we arrived at the village of Kerparoo.

From the Sefeed Tamesh or Meeaundeh-rood to

the Nummuck-aub-rood lies the district of Tennacorben; from thence to the Chalous, that of Kellauristauk; and from the Chalous to a river called the Soolerdeh, some ten fursucks beyond where we now were, is the district of Coojoor. They are all under Habeboollah Khan, who, as before mentioned, generally resides at Tehraun, being detained there in command of a regiment, so that the executive administration principally devolves on his Naïb, Ussuf Sultaun. The revenue derived from Coojoor is about 1800 tomauns, and from Tennacorben and Kellauristauk about 5300 tomauns, making altogether 7100 tomauns in money, besides a certain proportion of produce given in kind. The two latter districts furnish 1000 foot-soldiers. The productions of the low grounds are rice, a little silk of a quality inferior to that of Gheelaun, and sugar; while beans, wheat, and barley are grown in the highlands. Some five thousand families of the Khodjavend tribe, from Ardelan and Loristan, reside in Tennacorben and Kellauristauk; and in Coojoor about two thousand families of the Abdul Malekees, from the neighbourhood of Shirauz. These are Eeliaut tribes, but they have now no tents, and inhabit different villages, moving from one to the other as they find it convenient. They keep cattle, but employ themselves as well in the cultivation of the soil. They furnish between them about fifteen hundred mounted men, in lieu of being subject to taxation.

The village of Kerparoo is divided into two parts, containing some fifty houses, and pays a revenue of sixty tomauns per annum. Our quarters here were pretty comfortable.

Dec. 23. The thermometer to-day stood at 54° Fahr.; and the sky was overcast, and threatened rain. Leaving Kerparoo at about twenty minutes to nine, we continued along the coast in much the same direction as yesterday. After crossing the rivers Maushellek and Mooseabad, the mountains approached close to the shore, and we perceived large grey masses of rock amid the dark forest scenery; sometimes the road lay within the skirts of the woods, in which I noticed great quantities of wild jessamine, and the ground was covered with flowers.

The day gradually became more and more gloomy; the wind arose, and at last the rain came down in torrents; winter seemed to be commencing, and we saw vast flocks of wild fowl, one after the other in endless succession, flying over the Caspian, from the northern shores to their winter quarters in the more genial east.

Hastening onwards, we forded the Herrirood, Mazikerrood, and the Doosdeekerrood, the mouth of which was then choked by a sand-bank, which had been thrown up by the late winds; the waters, however, were collecting inside, and by their weight would very soon force a passage for themselves. A short distance from the shore, on the banks of this stream, is situated a large village called Kalentes. Some way further on, we crossed the river Alleeabad, and during our day's ride had passed over seven smaller rivulets besides those named.

Wet, and glad to have arrived near the end of our march, we turned from the sea-shore to the village of Serrordin Kellau, situated some few hundred

yards from the beach. After wandering for more than an hour among the straggling cottages, vainly seeking for a habitable lodging, we came at last to a house which seemed rather more eligible than the rest. It had two small apartments divided by an open space, where, surrounded by several children, sat a middle-aged lady, over a comfortable fire, composedly smoking a calleoon. To her we addressed ourselves; and mildly representing that it was rather damp outside, and that we had been a long time looking for a house without success, begged that she would allow us to establish ourselves in hers. She, however, soon put an end to the parley, by declaring that she would give us no lodging, and we must seek one elsewhere; but tired of wandering about in the rain, and perceiving that by merely asking civilly for it we were not likely to get lodged at all, we intimated our determination to remain where we were; and having dismounted, and sent our horses to an adjoining stable, requested that they would soon prepare one of the rooms which appeared unoccupied. On hearing this, they commenced a prodigious clamour; several women, who had collected on the spot, abusing our servants and ourselves at the top of their voices, and the muleteer for bringing us there; our people expostulating, threatening, and reviling in their turn. At length an old man came up, and raised a tremendous din, using every opprobrious epithet he could command towards our attendants, who were not backward in returning the compliment; and amid all this uproar we were given to understand that this was the anderoon of Bustam

Khan, the chief of the village, and that the lady was his wife. We had no idea of this, and endeavoured to explain that it was quite a mistake, and that if they would find us another place we would depart immediately; but the screams of the women and the vociferations of the men prevented anything from being heard or understood. The scene now became very animated; first, several old women, armed with sticks and stones, made their appearance in the field; then a tall, savage-looking fellow, furnished also with a huge club, came forward, and, seizing the Chavadar, began poking his ribs in a very unpleasant manner: our men interfered, and things looked serious. Meanwhile some twenty or thirty most ferocious-looking ruffians had collected around us, and the whole village was rapidly assembling. One fellow rushed forwards, shouting "Be-kesh, be-kesh!" (Pull, pull!) and, seizing the bridle of a horse which was tied to a pillar against which I was leaning, tore it from the post, and began belabouring the poor beast. I had been quietly looking on the scene before me; but, when I saw this fellow rushing towards me with uplifted club, I thought he was going to strike me, and hastily drew a pistol from my belt. Mr. A. was standing a few yards from me, with his hand on his pistol; and I expected every moment that some of our men would be struck, and either fire or use their swords, and that a fight would be commenced in real earnest. On drawing my weapon, an old man, who was striving to make peace, but who only increased the confusion, came to me, and said, "Sahib, Sahib, don't use it—don't

fire: everything will be settled directly." I had really no intention of doing so till things came to extremities; and indeed, situated as we were, on foot, and separated one from another, it would have been useless; and, had blood been spilt, we should most probably have been all murdered. The uproar was now at its height, clubs were brandished, and all the villagers were excited and indignant at the supposed affront to the anderoon of their chief. One of them, a handsome man of about forty, breathless and white with passion, was answering some expostulations of our head servant, and I caught the following exclamations: "But what words are these? What have you done? Are there not plenty of houses in the village besides this? But this—this is an anderoon!—will nothing but the anderoon of our chief satisfy you?" At length, after much angry gesticulation and noise, they began to perceive that it was a mistake; and that, if another place was procured for us, we would immediately withdraw. They therefore offered to conduct us to a lodging; and, having once more mounted our horses, we removed to a small hut, which was cleared for our reception. At a short distance from it was pointed out one for our attendants; but as we did not much like the idea of dividing our forces, they made themselves as comfortable as circumstances would allow in the verandah of our apartment.

All this fracas might have been avoided had the Khan's lady possessed sense enough to have explained matters, and the civility to have ordered some one to find us another lodging; and had our

stupid muleteer, who knew perfectly well who the people were, explained the matter to us. The chief himself was absent; there was no responsible person to whom we could refer; and these wild fellows, who were of the Abdul Malekee tribe, and notorious blackguards, cared for none but their own chiefs, and sometimes not even for them. Where there is a Ket-khoda, or some head-man to refer to on occasions of difficulty, such disturbances seldom take place, as he would be responsible for the consequences. At first they took us to be Russians; and one old man shouted out, "Yes, yes; these are they who wish to take our country."

The village belongs to Bustam Khan, chief of the Abdul Malekee in this district, and contains some thirty-five houses, of which twenty belong to the native peasantry, and the remainder to the tribe. They say that the land belonging to it produces about 1000 khalwars of rice, of which the Khan gets 100.

I noticed in several villages, and in this in particular, a method of stacking rice among the branches of trees, probably to preserve it from rats and other vermin, and also from the cattle.

In the evening we took every precaution against a surprise from the villagers; but we were unmolested, and slept soundly till the morning.

CHAPTER IX.

Continue our Route.—Rivers along the Coast.—Noor.—Reach Izzut-deh.—Sugar.—Departure.—Marshy Forest.—The Allemrood.—The Harrauz.—Swimming the Horses over.—A Scene of Confusion.—Talligi-sir.—Our Lodgings.—A merry Christmas!—Wintry appearance of the Country.—Road to Aumil.—The Meerza unhorsed.—Aumil.—The District of Aumil.—Bridge.—Mausoleum of Seyed Ghwaum-u-deen.—Iron Mines of Allisherood.—Road to Tehraun.—Leave Aumil.—Shah Abbas' Causeway.—Game.—Rice Mill.—Arrival at Borfroosh.—Our Quarters.—Receive a visit from the Prince's Meerza.—The Baugh-i-Shah.—The Prince's Apartment.—Ardeshir Meerza.—His Attachment to the Bottle.—Receive and pay visits.—Abbas Kooly Meerza.—Lovely Scenery.

Dec. 24th. During the night some snow had fallen on the neighbouring mountains; and heavy masses of clouds, coming from the sea, threatened a renewal of the rain.

At about half-past eight we left Serrordin Kellau, and continued our journey along the coast. From this point the mountains began gradually to recede from the shore, leaving a tract of low, marshy land, which, where we halted in the evening, was from fifteen to twenty miles broad, dotted with numerous villages, and extensively cultivated with sugar and rice.

During our march, the beach was more stony than usual, shelving abruptly into the sea, which appeared along this part of the coast to be of greater depth than before. We crossed the following streams, besides eight smaller ones without names; the Nummuck-aub-rood, the Aulemerood, the Katcheroo, the Allemrood, the Soolerdeh (dividing Coojoor from Noor), the Rustam-rood, and the Izzut-deh. On the banks of the three last-mentioned rivers are large villages of the same names. The district of Noor is inhabited entirely by its own peasantry, who have never allowed any Eeliauts to settle among them. The revenue of Noor amounts to about 6000 tomauns in money, and a proportion of produce in kind.

On entering Izzut-deh, we sent to the chief, Hussein Kooly Khan, requesting a lodging, which was immediately prepared for us. The village is long and straggling, extending about two miles from one end to the other, and situated along the shore on both sides of the river, which is seventy yards broad, and is crossed by a narrow wooden bridge. The houses, consisting of a single apartment, are miserable huts, thatched with reeds or the leaves of the sugar-cane, and amount in all to about a hundred and twenty, though the numerous sheds and out-houses among them would suggest a greater number. The village is held in tweel by Hussein Kooly Khan, and pays him a revenue of 1000 tomauns.

The Khan came to bid us welcome, and in the course of conversation, on our inquiring about the cultivation of the sugar-cane, and the method of

extracting the juice, he conducted us to a place where the operation was being performed.

The climate and marshy soil of the lower parts of Mauzunderoon seem well adapted to the growth of the sugar-cane. The appearance of a field of this plant is that of a dense mass of ordinary reeds of the height of about five feet. The canes kept for planting are preserved under ground during the winter; and in the month of March, the land having been prepared, they are cut into pieces of two or three joints, and planted in rows. At each joint there is a bud, and each bud produces from three to as many as ten shoots. The canes arrive at maturity in about eight months, when they are cut down close to the roots. The peasants consume a considerable quantity of the fresh cane, which they are continually chewing.

The mode of expressing the juice is as follows: A block, cut from the rough trunk of a tree, of about thirty inches in diameter, is placed firmly in the ground, standing above it to the height of about three feet. It is hollowed out in the shape of a cone, with a passage at the bottom, through which the juice runs into a wooden trough, placed in the ground for its reception. In the hollow of the block a pole is placed in a slanting direction, so that in revolving it presses against the sides of the cone: the upper end of the pole is fitted into the centre of a bent stick, one end of which is fastened down to the extremity of a long narrow frame, which revolves round the block of wood; while the other end of the stick is fastened by a rope to the oppo-

site extremity of the frame, the rope being long enough to allow that end of the stick to remain horizontal. The frame is drawn round by a bullock driven by a boy seated on the end next the animal; and the lad's weight, keeping the frame in an oblique position, acts on the pole, and maintains its equal pressure on the sides of the funnel. On the other end of the frame are placed a quantity of canes, which a man, who walks round with the machine, breaks into small pieces, and casts into the funnel, taking out the refuse from which the juice has been expressed.

Contiguous to the pressing-machine is a caldron placed over a fire. The juice is taken from the receiving-trough, and strained through a coarse cloth into the boiler, where it remains for some hours, being continually stirred, until a thick scum rises to the surface, which is skimmed off, and the liquor is put into jars to cool. When cold, it is strained, and boiled a second and third time, after which it becomes of the consistency of thick mud; and the process is completed by pouring it into flat dishes to dry.

When dry, it forms a paste, in appearance very much like gingerbread of a light colour; and, being cut into small squares, is sold for about one shilling per maun tabreez of six and a half pounds. The molasses is made from the inferior plants, and is less boiled. It sells for half the price of the sugar. The whole apparatus just described is inclosed in a small thatched shed. No quicklime or any other ingredient is used to purify the liquor, the prepara-

tion being merely confined to crushing, straining, and boiling; and the sugar has consequently a strong unpleasant flavour. We were told that in the course of a day one machine expresses about fifteen mauns shahee of juice, which yields five mauns shahee* of sugar; thus the value of the whole produce of one mill in a day amounts to about ten shillings. We heard afterwards that a small quantity of Mauzunderoon sugar had been sent to Russia, where it was found very tolerable after being refined; but nearly all that is manufactured here is consumed in this and the neighbouring provinces.

Dec. 25th. In the night snow fell on the mountains; and this morning a gale was blowing, and rain seemed impending. The thermometer was at 48° Fahr. We intended to go to Aumil to-day, very much against the inclination of our Chavadars, who protested that they only knew one road to Borfroosh, that by the sea-shore; Aumil was out of the way, and they had never been there before. We were determined, however, to see the town, and procured a guide from Hussein Kooly Khan. The baggage was not ready before ourselves, and we started with it.

Our guide led us at first along a dry path parallel to the shore, through low bushes; but afterwards, turning into the belt of forest between us and the sea, we proceeded towards the beach: no track was here visible, and the rain of the preceding night had so flooded the ground, which was of a soft boggy nature, that it was almost impassable. At

* One maun shahee is equal to two mauns tabreez.

length one of our servants' horses, which was in advance, got so deep in the mire, that, after a series of ineffectual plunges and struggles, he fell on his side (upsetting his rider into the water), and remained in that position till he was hauled out. We could not pass this place, and hardly knew how to get back, as the ground on every side was a complete bog. A great deal of shouting then ensued, which at length produced an open-mouthed peasant, much astonished at the uproar in the usually silent forest; who, leading us through a devious path among the trees, at last brought us to the seashore, on the banks of the Allemrood. This river is the boundary between the district of Noor and Aumil; and, more inland, it is called the Allisherood. We were detained above a quarter of an hour in finding a practicable ford, as the stream was deep, rapid, and dangerous from quicksands. After many fruitless trials, the passage was accomplished; the water, however, running considerably above the horses' girths. The sea was rougher to-day than we had yet seen it, the breakers were running very high, and the wind was apparently increasing; but the clouds had cleared off, and we were relieved from our apprehensions of rain.

We continued our march among low sand-hills, covered with dwarf oak, prickly shrubs, and medlar-trees, for three or four miles, till we arrived at the Harrauz, on the opposite bank of which the village of Mahmoudabad is built. The river was about thirty yards broad; its bed was deep, and the current rapid. Several large boats from Badcobeh lay alongside the

banks, which had brought naphtha, and were about to load rice in return. From the people to whom they belonged we learned that the only method of crossing was in a boat, the horses swimming over. This was unpleasant and troublesome; but, there being no alternative, we had our riding-horses stripped, and their saddles and bridles put into the boat in which we were ferried over. One of our own horses swam on either side of the boat at each turn; but those belonging to the muleteers came five or six at a time; after them their loads were brought across, and the confusion and uproar was perfectly astonishing. In Persia nothing is done quietly: I remember at Enzellee once hearing a noise in the street, which I thought could be nothing less than a fight between twenty or thirty people, or a popular commotion in its height; when, hastening to the spot, I found it simply proceeded from half a dozen ragamuffins, moving the trunk of a tree towards the wharf! In the present instance everybody was hallooing to everybody else, and nobody listening to any one. Here a muleteer let one of the packages fall into the water, whereupon one of our servants commenced a vigorous application of the whip, accompanied by a torrent of abuse:—there might be seen four grooms at one horse, endeavouring to saddle it in an impossible space of time, all interfering with each other, and raising a deafening clamour. In one corner I perceived a servant indefatigably punching the head of an unfortunate bystander, for what precise reason I could not ascertain, unless to keep his hands employed amid the general activity. In an-

other place some horses had begun to fight; and a concourse of people, rolling and tumbling one over the other, were making frantic efforts to separate them. The head muleteer, with a most melancholy and distracted expression of countenance, was inquiring about one of his horses, which had walked off no one knew where, and was probably taking a quiet luncheon in the neighbouring jungle. There sat a small boy, raising a doleful lamentation: he had somehow got into the boat among the baggage, and, on landing, was accidentally shoved overboard, and, being pulled out, everybody cuffed him for tumbling in. Lastly, to complete the confusion, all the riding-horses were being galloped about, to keep them from catching cold, by a pack of vagabonds, in such a manner, that those employed in getting the packages ready found themselves every moment in imminent peril of being run over; some twenty or thirty villagers had besides come to look on or to assist, as the case might be, who only increased the tumult. Imagine all this, and a faint idea of the scene may be formed.

In about an hour and a half, all being ready, we turned inland through the village of Mahmoudabad, a collection of small huts scattered here and there; and, finding that we should not have time to reach Aumil, proceeded a short distance further, over a swampy country, to the village of Talligi-sir: this was almost a continuation of Mahmoudabad, houses being found nearly all along the road.

We continued onward, vainly endeavouring to find a suitable lodging, till at last we came to

a spacious, well-built brick house, which, in external appearance, seemed a palace in comparison with the miserable mud-huts by which it was surrounded. The roof was tiled, and covered a divan-khoneh, open in front, with two good-sized rooms on each side. It belonged to a Meerza Saïd, the owner of the village, having been built by his father about thirty years before, and was now rapidly falling into decay, as is almost every building one sees in Persia. The Meerza was absent at Aumil, and we found the place open and empty. When he is here, he lives with his harem in another house, not far distant; this being used merely as a place for transacting public business, and receiving visitors.

We took possession of this abandoned and cheerless place; and by stopping up the crevices, laying down carpets, hanging up curtains before the numberless doors which we could not shut, and lighting a roaring fire, contrived to give it a less melancholy appearance. Thus, amid rice-swamps and jungle, we were doomed to pass the evening of Christmas-day; and I never before spent such a dreary one. We made several ineffectual efforts to be merry, but somehow an unusual feeling of gloominess seemed to oppress us both. In vain we drank punch—in vain we sang songs: the punch failed to exhilarate, and the songs appeared to have lost their harmony. The wind howled mournfully through the forest, and the rain pattered against the broken windows. All further attempts at a merry Christmas were abandoned; and we sank insensibly into

a silent reverie, which continued unbroken until we went to bed.

During the night the rain had fallen heavily; the morning turned out cold and dreary; and a sharp wind blew from the sea, driving before it dark banks of mist, which in many places rose no higher than the tops of the trees. Little more than a month had passed since we entered the wooded districts along the shores of the Caspian—but how changed the scene! Then, all was bright and cheerful, and the forest was clothed in the foliage of summer: now, nothing but bare, damp-looking branches, covered with moss and lichens, stretched themselves above our path, hoarsely creaking in the wind and dripping with rain, so that a more wintry scene cannot possibly be imagined.

At nine o'clock we mounted our horses and started for Aumil. The road (if one can possibly apply the term where there was really no road) lay where every one found it most practicable, through a succession of swampy rice-fields, interrupted occasionally by a mile or two of forest. In several places we encountered wide and deep ditches, which we crossed, over narrow bridges formed of the trunks of a couple of trees, made so slippery by the rain and mud that they were dangerous and unpleasant both to the horses and their riders. In passing one of these, the horse of our unfortunate Meerza fell, pitching its rider into the ditch, where he was regularly planted in the soft mud, head downwards: he was hauled out just before he was choked; and, finding him unhurt, I could not forbear a hearty

laugh at the forlorn and ridiculous figure he cut, his bald head covered with mud and slime.

At length we arrived on a wide plain, partly cultivated and partly covered with fern and brambles, in the midst of which Aumil is situated. The town is concealed by tall trees in the streets and gardens: the only conspicuous objects in approaching are three small tombs, probably containing the remains of some of the Seyed dynasty, who formerly reigned in Mauzunderoon.

We were detained some time before a lodging was found, and then were obliged to content ourselves with a very miserable place, as the Haukim and the other authorities to whom we might have applied were absent. While things were being prepared, we rode through the town and about its environs.

Aumil is, at present, a most dilapidated place: the houses are chiefly of brick, and in many places have fallen to ruin and exhibit heaps of rubbish. The streets are filthy lanes knee-deep in mud, and the bazars are badly built and supplied. The principal row of shops is covered with a thatched roof, which is suffered to fall gradually to pieces, though a few poles and a little straw would suffice to repair it. I could form no idea of the extent of the town. The amount of the population differs materially with the season, as in summer a great proportion retire to their yeilauks among the mountains.

The only trade here appears to be with Borfroosh, for the supply of the inhabitants and the neighbouring villages. Various small taxes on shops

and the rent of the office of durrogha, or chief of police, amount to 800 tomauns,—all the town pays in the shape of taxes. Formerly a prince resided here as governor; but now the place is under a Haukim appointed by Ardeshir Meerza, the governor of the province.

The district of Aumil, as well as the town, was desolated by the plague of 1831—32, in common with the rest of the province, and has never recovered the blow. The neighbourhood produces a little silk, and considerable quantities of rice, sugar, and cotton.

At this season, the river Harrauz, which flows past the eastern side of the town, and which must be a different stream or branch of the Harrauz we had already crossed at Mahmoudabad, is very insignificant, running through one channel of a wide stony bed. It is spanned by a long brick bridge of twelve pointed arches, erected on the site of that described by Hanway as a "sumptuous bridge," over which it was not thought lucky to pass on horseback, and every traveller dismounted and passed it on foot; this tradition, however, seems to have vanished with the old fabric, for it is not now even remembered by the inhabitants. The present structure was erected about forty years ago; it is only eight feet wide between the parapets, and, though it does not appear substantial enough to have resisted the body of water which rushes down the river in spring, it is, as yet, in good repair.

We visited the mausoleum of the Seyed Ghwaum-

u-deen, (strength of religion,) more commonly called Meer Bozurk. This man, descended from Zein-ul-Abudeen, a grandson of Allee, was so venerated for his piety and virtues by the inhabitants of Mauzunderoon, which at that time was an independent kingdom, that, in the course of some internal revolutions, he was raised to the throne, A.H. 760, A.D. 1358, and founded a dynasty, which ruled for a hundred and sixty years. The tomb presents a large square mass of masonry in a ruinous condition, covered with rank vegetation, among which the wild fig-tree is conspicuous, thrusting its roots and branches through the walls, and tending to hasten their fall. It was built by Shah Abbas, who was descended from the Seyed on his mother's side. The exterior is decorated with lacquered tiles, though the workmanship was neither so beautiful nor so fine as some other specimens I have seen.

The principal apartment of the building is a large, square, domed hall, in the centre of which stands a case of carved wood containing the remains of the saint. The lower parts of the walls are adorned with scrolls of flowers in tile-work; but, with the exception of the case just mentioned, the place is empty, having no lamps or ornaments of any kind. Around this hall are several smaller chambers, formerly perhaps inhabited by the attendants of the shrine, but now, for the most part, occupied by cattle. One of these rooms we found tenanted by a party of dervishes, seated in a circle on the floor, smoking a kalleoon. It

was one of the wildest and most picturesque groups I ever saw, and would have made a fine subject for a painting. The chamber was lofty and gloomy, and heaps of rubbish had fallen from the decayed roof: in one corner sat an old haggard-looking man, almost bent double over a stone slab held between his knees, on which he was grinding some substance to powder, and mumbling to himself a low chant. In the centre, the dervishes were grouped round the dying embers of a wood fire, in their fantastic dresses, their uncombed locks streaming over their shoulders in wild luxuriance. Some were from India, and were habited in white turbans and body-wrappers; one carried a large panther-skin, but each wore a different costume; and here and there, either lying on the floor or leaning against the wall, might be seen a heavy knotted club, a short spear, or curious old battle-axe. They saluted us with the usual "Yah hak!" on entering, and received a trifle when we left the place.

Of the palace of Shah Abbas, as well as of the old fort which Hanway mentions as strong and regular beyond anything he had seen in Persia, there are no traces save a few mounds of earth; the former was situated near the mausoleum just described, and the latter near the bridge.

About four fursucks hence, among the mountains, are the iron mines of Allisherood, where probably Nadir Shah established his foundry for cannon and his forges for horse-shoes. They are, at present, worked on account of the government,

under the management of Meerza Agha Khan, but only during the four winter months. From what I heard regarding them, the method of working is much the same as that adopted at the mines in Karadaugh. The ore is found scattered on or near the surface of the soil, and each workman takes it from the spot, and in the manner he finds most convenient, no restrictions being imposed as to the mode of mining. The iron is converted into horse-shoes, nails, and cannon-balls; which latter, and part of the former, are sent to Tehraun, and the remainder used in the province. The metal was said to be inferior to Russian, and the quantity produced not so great as formerly. We were told that, a few years previous, a hundred thousand cannon-balls were annually cast there.

Aumil is five days' journey from the capital across the mountains; the road passes through the district of Lorijan, situated equi-distant from both places. Lorijan is inhabited by about five thousand families, under Abbas Kooly Khan, a native chief, who furnishes one thousand foot-soldiers to the crown.

We left Aumil at nine o'clock, and proceeded across the plain in a general direction N.E. by E. The road in most places was very bad, and, having no guide, we occasionally went wrong, and several times got into morasses, from which we had great difficulty in extricating ourselves. We afterwards learned that there was a much shorter and better path. The plain, as far as one could judge at this season, appeared a series of rice-fields divided

by hedges of brambles and tall reeds, which are so high and close, that, from the road, the whole country appeared covered with a thick low jungle. Many flocks of sheep and goats were feeding; the former were of the thin-tailed breed. Here and there a clump of trees might be seen, marking the site of a village, though not a house was anywhere visible; and the prospect was altogether dreary and uninteresting, particularly on a damp cloudy day, such as the present happened to be. Once or twice we came upon a part of Shah Abbas' ancient causeway, which is here only to be distinguished by a few yards of hard paved road, occasionally interrupting the broken and muddy track. Throughout Gheelaun, and as far as we have yet penetrated into Mauzunderoon, this work is so overgrown by the forest, that scarce a trace can be found.

During the course of the ride, I saw snipes, quails, woodcocks, ducks, and quantities of herons of different kinds; the wild hogs had left evident traces of their presence in almost every field, and we started several jackals. The plain seemed to abound with game, but as the sky threatened rain, and we wished to arrive early at Borfroosh, we had no time to seek it.

On the banks of a small rivulet by the road-side I observed a rude water-mill for freeing the rice from its husk. The machinery was of very simple construction. The trunk of a tree formed an axle, into one end of which were inserted a number of boards, placed under a stream and performing

the functions of a water-wheel. A few feet from this, a large block was fastened to the trunk, and acted as a cog, catching, as it revolved, one end of a long beam placed at right angles to it, and having a heavy pestle at the other extremity, which was lifted up, and, being released from the revolving cog, fell on the rice placed under it in a hole in the earth, which served as a mortar; this machinery was covered by a thatched shed. I afterwards saw many of these mills in Mauzunderoon and Astrabad. The general method of separating the rice from the straw is by trampling it out with horses or oxen; but the process above described is requisite to free it from the husk, which adheres to it most tenaciously.

After a tedious ride of nearly five fursucks, we came to the Bawbil, two miles from Borfroosh. Crossing over a fine bridge of nine arches, in capital repair, built by Mohamed Hassan Khan, father of Agha Mohamed Khan, we continued a short distance further over a villanous road, and then entered the town.

Here I was prepared for something superior to what we had hitherto seen, but was very much surprised at passing through part of a miserable bazar, where our horses were up to their girths in mire; the ruin and decay on every side plainly indicating, that, whatever Borfroosh might have been, its glory had departed, and it was no longer the flourishing and opulent city described by former travellers.

It has generally been called Balfroosh, but in Persian it is written with a ر *reh*, and is correctly

called Borfroosh, meaning a place of commerce, from "bor," a package, and "froosh," sale.

On arriving at the place which had been designed for our accommodation, we found a spacious house situated between two gardens, very fine to look at, but on nearer inspection proving, as usual, half in ruins, and the only habitable rooms having no glass in the window-frames. As it was our intention to remain here at least a week, we insisted that something better should be found, or we should complain to the Shahzadeh. A long palaver ensued, in which the Beglerbeg's man, who had been ordered to find us good quarters, protested that nothing better was to be procured in Borfroosh: this place was not like Saree, the capital; there were no amaurets, no palaces here. We interrupted him at this juncture, and begged leave distinctly to have it understood that we merely wished for two habitable rooms, no matter where; but God preserve us from palaces, as whenever we had been exultingly told that we were to take up our quarters in an amauret, so sure were we to find a large, straggling place, totally in ruins, and not even fit for our cattle. The man then said that the town had fallen to decay; what could he do? God help him! he could not build a house for us, or he would do it with the greatest pleasure; and, moreover, with regard to windows, none of the houses in the town had glass windows. Finally, the matter was arranged by their promising, that, if we would remain here this one evening, every corner of the town should

be searched on the following morning for a suitable lodging. We then endeavoured to make the place as comfortable as possible, with a secret presentiment that, notwithstanding all protestations to the contrary, this would be our apartment as long as we remained in Borfroosh. A fire was lighted, as it was chilly and I was shivering with an ague: in a short time we found the room full of smoke, and, looking for the cause of it, discovered to our dismay that the fire-place was without a chimney. When just one remove from suffocation, the fire was taken away, all the windows and doors thrown open, and we had recourse to charcoal, which gave us both a violent headache, and we went to bed in a miserable plight.

As soon as we were dressed in the morning, we received a visit from the Prince's Meerza, a jolly, goodnatured-looking personage, who came to bid us welcome on the part of his master. He paid us a variety of compliments, both personal and national; expressed his own peculiar happiness at seeing us; dropped a word or two in abuse of the Russians, which he thought must be particularly pleasing; and concluded by hoping that more suitable quarters might be procured, as he had heard we were not satisfied with those we now occupied. Presently the Beglerbeg's man came in, and offered to take one of our servants to look for a better place, but at the same time felt confident that it would be to no purpose. At last, it being proposed that some wooden bars should be nailed across the window-frames, and paper pasted over them instead of glass,

we agreed to remain, as there appeared no chance of getting anything better.

After breakfast, which, with dinner, was regularly sent every day by the Beglerbeg, at the orders of the Shahzadeh, we prepared to pay a visit to Ardeshir Meerza, a brother of the present Shah by another mother. All ceremonies having been previously arranged, we mounted our horses, and proceeded towards his dwelling. His court and harem are at Saree, where he usually resides; though, as his revenue is not large, he keeps little or no state. At this time he was making a tour of his province, probably with a view to the presents he might receive: he had been here a short time, intending to remain till after the Moharrem, and had taken up his residence in the palace of the Baugh-i-shah (king's garden). This is a pleasure-house, situated on an island in the midst of a small lake, about two miles in circumference. The water was now low, and covered with reeds, water-lilies, and other aquatic plants; but various small streams, and, I believe, a communication with the river Bawbil, never allow it to sink below a certain level. Both a pleasure-house and the lake were originally constructed by Shah Abbas; of the former nothing remains but a few stone pillars. We crossed the water over a long, narrow bridge, formed of planks, supported on a number of brick piers; part of the woodwork was new, but the remainder was so rotten and loose that I momentarily expected it to give way under my horse's feet. Having, however, safely reached the island, we passed the present palace, a large house

with an upper story, and proceeding through part of the garden, which was planted with cypress and orange trees, came to a low building, where we dismounted, and were ushered into the Prince's apartment.

It was a small, square room: the ceiling had partly given way, revealing the bare rafters; and the walls, which had originally been of white plaster, were now of a dirty brown hue, scribbled and scratched all over. There were four doors, in front of which four very dirty chintz curtains were suspended; and at one end of the room a stained glass window, minus several panes, was thrown open. A painted table, of Russian manufacture, three chairs, a few carpets, and the cushions on which the Prince was reclining, completed the entire furniture.

Ardeshir Meerza is a man of middling size, inclining to corpulency, with a jolly-looking, round visage, bearing a strong resemblance to the rest of the royal family. He was dressed in a plain, single-breasted, drab-coloured coat, buttoned to the throat by about forty gilt buttons, placed as close together as possible: round his waist he wore a belt of gold lace; and, over all, a dark, plum-coloured cloak. He was very polite and affable, hoped that we had been well treated in his territory, and asked many questions regarding our journey. He inquired after all the English he had known in Persia; and, the conversation turning on India and the East India Company, he begged to know whether the report he had heard that they had killed the "coompanee," was the fact or not. We presently ascertained

that he alluded to the death of Sir William Macnaughten.

We had heard that the Shahzadeh was a great drinker, and his weak and bloodshot eyes seemed confirmatory of the report; but I could not suppress a smile, when tea was brought in, to see his servant draw forth from the recesses of his pocket a black bottle of rum: we, of course, accepted a little in our tea, while the Prince held out his already half-empty cup, which the servant filled to the brim.

Having remained about three-quarters of an hour, we received a nod from Abbas Kooly Meerza, another Shahzadeh, who acted as master of ceremonies, and, taking leave of the Prince, returned to our quarters.

The following day was rainy, but the 30th proved fine. We had hardly risen when we received a visit from the Haukim of Borfroosh, Assadoollah Khan, and Abbas Kooly Meerza; the conversation was on indifferent subjects, principally regarding our journey, and after remaining about an hour they departed. Towards evening we visited the Beglerbeg, Abbas Khan, a man of high rank, and the Vizier of the Prince. He is a dark-complexioned, corpulent person, and received us with peculiar civility. He kept up a brisk fire of questions regarding England, one of which was if we had not ships which sail under water,—alluding to the diving-bell,—in which he thought people made journeys from place to place below the surface. While we were with him, some sportsmen brought in a fine wild goat, shot on the neighbour-

ing mountains, which the Khan politely ordered to be sent to our quarters. After remaining nearly two hours, we returned home, and paid a visit to the master of the house we occupied, from whom we understood that the Prince wished to ask us to dinner, but that he was puzzled about knives and forks; we begged, however, that he might be informed that we could eat with our fingers, and that he must not inconvenience himself on our account.

The last day of the year dawned bright and glorious, and we breakfasted in the open air in the garden. During the morning we received several visits: first came a merchant, who talked of trade; then a Moollah, who talked of religion; and then a Meerza, a Khan, and some others.

In the afternoon we returned Abbas Kooly Meerza's visit. This prince, a nephew of the present Shah, was a most agreeable person, and took our fancy amazingly. He was very poor, and we found him in a wretched little room waited upon by two other young Shahzadehs. Throughout Mauzunderoon and Astrabad, the native country of the Cadjers, almost every other man you meet is a Shahzadeh; but most of them, not being possessed of a single tomaun, are consequently not regarded with any great degree of respect. During our visit we were shown some fine falcons; and Abbas Kooly Meerza politely offered to hawk a crow the next morning, and proposed a day's pheasant shooting some little distance from the town, if agreeable to us: we expressed our thanks

and willingness; but, as our time was pretty well occupied during the remainder of our stay at Borfroosh, the idea was dropped. After taking leave, we strolled towards the Baugh-i-shah. It was a lovely sunset, and the scene was altogether beautiful; the snow-capped peak of Demawund in the back-ground rising far above the long chain of distant hills which bound the province. In a short time we were joined by Abbas Kooly Meerza, and, having lingered on the banks of the little lake till long after sun-down, returned home.

CHAPTER X.

Aide-i-Koorban.—The Prince receives a Khalaat from Tehraun.—Ride out to witness the Investiture.—Return to Town.—Borfroosh.—Causes of its decay.—The Streets.—Bazars.—Situation.—Extent.—Revenue.—Trade.—We obtain a Bath.—Remarks.—The Province of Mauzunderoon.—Its Situation.—Appearance.—Wild Animals.—Districts.—Salary of the Governor.—Inhabitants.—Military Force.—Language of the Peasantry.—Wandering Tribes.—Productions.—Rice.—Sugar.—Cotton.—Grain.—Fruits.—The Revenue.—Administration.—Roads.—Rivers.—Fish.—Climate.—Similarity to India.—Invitation to a Hog-hunt.—The River Bawbil.—Dine with Ardeshir Meerza.—The Decorations of the Table.—The Prince's Drawings.—Dinner.—Persian Music and Musicians.—Daoud Meerza.—The Zil-i-Sultaun.—Take Leave.

Jan. 1st, 1844.—THE morning was lovely, and I strolled towards the Baugh-i-shah and made a sketch of it. On returning, I found our attendants slaughtering sheep, it being their Aide-i-Koorban, or feast of sacrifice, which is held in commemoration of the intended sacrifice of Isaac. An old Moollah was present, who mumbled a few sentences of prayer; at one particular period of which he made a sign to our cook, Ismael, who gave the animals a most ferocious gash across the throat, nearly severing the head from the body.

In the afternoon we rode out to see the Shahzadeh put on a khalaat, or dress of honour, which

had arrived for him from Tehraun. It is customary for the person to whom the dress is sent to meet the bearer of it a short distance from the town. In some places there is a house built for the purpose, called a khalaat-pooshaun, as at Tabreez; but, where there is none such, the nearest village on the road by which the messenger arrives is generally the appointed place. A khalaat may be anything,—a jewelled sabre, a dagger, a shawl, or a shawl-kaba, (Persian coat,) which is put on in great form and worn during the remainder of the day. We arrived too late to witness the ceremony of investiture. When we came into the Prince's presence, he was seated in a small open hut, with his minister, Abbas Khan, who had also received a khalaat; that sent the Prince was a shawl-dress and a jewelled sabre, the Khan's was merely the former. The floor was spread with trays of sweetmeats, and beyond them stood a man bearing a sword. Outside were three or four pehlivans (wrestlers), who appeared to have just concluded an exhibition of strength, as they retired directly we were seated. A poet was then introduced, who recited from a piece of paper some lines of his own composition, in praise of the Prince: he was a droll-looking old fellow, without a tooth in his head; and the contortions of his features, and the manner in which he mouthed his verses, were ridiculous in the extreme. When he had concluded, he laid the manuscript at the Prince's feet, who gave him the usual "Barikellah, barikellah!" (Well done!) and made the little man

hold his head at least three inches higher, by observing that he was a perfect Saadi. Just as we were about to go, a dervish came forward and began shouting out an Arabic prayer: the feroshes and other attendants of the Shahzadeh endeavoured to silence him, but to no purpose; "It is a prayer," said he; "it must be spoken." In about a quarter of an hour he concluded, and the people who understood him seemed to be much edified; a shaking of heads took place, and "Khoob, bussior khoob!" (Good, very good!) was muttered among the crowd. The dervish received a piece of gold, and we all rose to depart. A considerable number of lookers-on had assembled, and there was a general movement. The state exhibited on the occasion was rather imposing. One cracked bugle was sounded, producing a note something between a penny trumpet and a trombone; a man with a dirty uniform and a rusty sword paraded about and saluted; and three or four feroshes shouted to everyone to get out of the way, whereupon everybody elbowed his neighbour's ribs, and the Prince mounted his horse. We rode by his side, and on the way back he chatted gaily on different subjects; spoke about drawing, and said that he was something of a draughtsman himself; he asked us to dine with him the next evening, and requested that I would bring my sketch-book with me. Crowds of people from the town met us on the road to congratulate the Shahzadeh, and "Mobarek bashed!" (May it be fortunate!) resounded on all sides. Having accom-

panied the Prince nearly as far as his residence, we took leave and returned to our lodgings.

The prosperity of Borfroosh seems to have gradually declined since it ceased to be wholly a city of merchants. Formerly the management of affairs was in their own hands; the Haukim and his assistants were merchants, and, it being their interest not to oppress their fellow-traders, the place was rich and prosperous; when, however, the employés of government were introduced, exactions, petty extortions, and a long train of consequent evils ensued, which soon affected the trade: but the great and immediate cause of its present ruinous condition was the plague before alluded to, which, after desolating Gheelaun, and having ravaged the western shores of the Caspian, spread rapidly through Mauzunderoon and Astrabad, and finally attacked the Toorcomans, when it ceased for want of more victims. Not a single town, and very few villages, escaped; and the number of people who died at Borfroosh, from the accounts kept by the Moollahs, was estimated at about eighty thousand. The streets, which only twenty years ago were neat and clean, bespeaking an opulent and well-ordered town, are now in a condition that I have not seen equalled in the meanest villages through which we have passed; they are totally broken up, and no attempt is ever made to repair them. The bazars, which are described by Fraser as extending for a mile, and by far better filled than those of Isphahaun, consisting of "substantially built shops," and "kept in excellent repair,"

now exhibit a melancholy contrast to this eulogium; a few minutes' walk takes the traveller through all that remains. Only part is roofed, and that is full of holes and falling to decay. From the line of shops branch off two or three caravanserais, chiefly occupied by merchants, of whom there are about twenty-five, carrying on the trade with Russia and the interior, besides about a hundred other petty traders, who are mere shopkeepers. Altogether the bazars now contain between five and six hundred shops; of these not more than two hundred are well supplied, and those chiefly with articles of local consumption and manufacture, while a few are furnished with British and Russian goods. The whole bazar at present extends about a quarter of a mile, and is generally pretty well thronged with people. Beyond it are some wretched sheds, but we found the streets quite impassable on account of the mud; and on first entering the bazar is a line of ruined and unoccupied shops, making the whole former extent perhaps a little more than half a mile. The greater part presents a sickening picture of desolation and decay, heightened in the present instance by the idea I had formed of the opulence and prosperity of the place.

Borfroosh is situated in the midst of a flat country, some twelve or thirteen miles from the mountains, and a like distance from the sea-shore, and is surrounded on all sides by cultivation of rice, sugar, and cotton: it is built amidst tall forest-trees, in the same manner as Resht; and as the houses are small, and stand in separate groups, it is difficult to be-

lieve oneself walking in a large town, and impossible to guess at its extent from a hasty observation. At present it is said to contain about twelve thousand houses, and is divided into thirty-two mahalehs or parishes. It possesses sixteen or seventeen medressehs, and several smaller caravanserais besides those adjoining the bazars. There are no ancient buildings or antiquities to attract the attention of the traveller, and in its present miserable condition Borfroosh ill repays the fatigue and labour of getting over the execrable roads which lead to it.

The legitimate annual revenue of the town of which account is taken is 1735* tomauns; but by a little gentle squeezing on the part of the Prince, and the Haukim, Assadoollah Khan, it is made to amount to 3000 tomauns. The latter receives no regular salary, and has in a great measure to depend on his talents in this way for his subsistence. The revenue derived from the district, independent of that of the town, amounts to about 8270 tomauns in money, besides a proportion of produce in kind.

Borfroosh is still the chief commercial town of Mauzunderoon, from which the others principally derive their supplies, and from which the productions of the country are exported to the neighbouring provinces. From Astrabad the returns are in soap, nummuds (felts), and chools (horse-coverings), manufactured by the Toorcomans. From Tehraun are received British manufactures and those of the interior of Persia; prints from Ispha-

* See Appendix (B.)

haun; velvets from Cashan, and great quantities of dried fruits; and from the neighbourhood of Hamadan, galls, which are exported to Russia. To Gheelaun a great deal of rice and sugar is sent from all parts of the coast in large boats, a considerable portion of the former being in transit for Tabreez and the interior, through Enzellee; the returns are in silk and some European goods. The trade with Russia passes through Meshed-i-sir (the port of Borfroosh), where there is a custom-house.

From all I heard it would appear that the trade has fallen off materially since the plague, but I am inclined to think that former accounts of it have been highly exaggerated. The imports from the interior of Persia must have been for the supply of Mauzunderoon, and Astrabad, with the Toorkoman tribes in its vicinity, and for export to Russia; but from the small size of the two provinces, and the avaricious and despotic nature of their governors, they could never have created any very extensive commerce. The trade with Russia seems not to have been important, though that power has used all her endeavours to encourage its extension. The annual demand at present seldom exceeds a few small ship-loads.

In the evening, after dark, we went to a capital bath. We had not expected to obtain one here, having heard so much of the bigotry of the people; but we found on inquiry that no difficulty was made. The idea of the uncleanliness of Christians is rapidly giving way in Persia to more civilized notions; and their other religious prejudices seem

to be generally growing weaker, particularly among the higher classes, who have had opportunities of becoming acquainted with Europeans. Ignorance and bigotry go hand in hand; and as among the lower grades of the people ignorance is inconceivably profound, so I should have concluded the bigotry to have existed in an equal degree, but I must say that we saw little or none of it. Throughout Mauzunderoon and Gheelaun, which are generally considered the very nurseries of intolerance, we experienced nothing but the most civil and polite attentions; the people sat with us, shook our hands, ate with us, offered us their kalleoons, and never by the slightest word or gesture showed that they considered us nedjis (unclean). It is true that our intercourse was for the most part with the upper classes, those bred about the Court, and whose politeness would have prevented any expression of such a feeling; but, even when we have come in contact with the poor, we have invariably found them kind and hospitable, and a peculiar respect for the Inglese seems to exist among them. It is possible that this may give rather too favourable an idea of the peasantry, but I merely speak of them as we found them; and it is not improbable that a party of ten or twelve well-armed attendants following in our rear very often suggested, if it did not entirely command, the respect and hospitality we received.

Mohamedanism and bad government are the two effectual bars to the prosperity and civilization of Persia; but, with the cleverness which no one can

deny to the natives,—were the former divested of its strongest prejudices, and the latter more imbued with a spirit of philanthropy and liberality,—Persia would rapidly advance in prosperity, instead of, as at present, becoming more impoverished and feeble each successive year. The people are naturally quick, willing to learn, and in imitative talent, I should think, not inferior to any nation in the world: but the oppressive nature of the government, and the insecurity of property, put a stop to amelioration; and he who attempts improvement may often see the fruits of his labour taken from him, and, instead of deriving any advantage from it, may find himself in a worse condition than before.

It may not be out of place to say a few words regarding the province generally.

In writing down the names of places I have hitherto endeavoured, as nearly as possible, to follow the sounds as pronounced by the inhabitants, and Mauzunderoon both gives the general pronunciation, and follows closely the etymology; it being from an old Persian word "Mauz," a mountain, and "underoon" or "anderoon," the inside, meaning the country within the mountains. It is a narrow tract of land extending along part of the southern shore of the Caspian, which forms its northern boundary; to the south and west lay the chain of the Elburz; on the north-west it is bounded by Gheelaun, and on the east by Astrabad. In some places the mountains advance to within a mile of the shore; but about Borfroosh, the widest part of the province, they recede some twenty-six miles from

the sea. The intervening country is flat, and here and there covered with jungle, though the greater part is occupied in the cultivation of rice, sugar, and cotton; the villages are very numerous. The mountains are also well populated, and clothed with forests abounding with wild beasts; among others, the royal tiger, panther, bear, wolf, goat, and deer of different kinds, and the wild pig, are found in vast quantities. Pheasants, woodcocks, and wild ducks are abundant all over the province.

Besides the districts of Tennacorben, Kellauristauk, and Coojoor, Mauzunderoon is divided into six mahalehs or districts named after their chief towns or large villages, as follows:—

Aumil; Borfroosh; Meshed-i-sir; Saree; Ashreff; and Ferrabad; which are again subdivided into a number of petty parishes.

Saree is the capital of the province, and the residence of the Prince Ardeshir Meerza and his Court. He is not able to maintain much state, his salary being only 4000 tomauns; though to this may be added 3000 to his wife and two sons, making altogether 7000 tomauns, or 3500*l.*

The inhabitants of Mauzunderoon are principally a native population. They furnish to government about twelve thousand foot-soldiers, armed with rifles or common guns, mostly with flint-locks, though some have match-locks. About two thousand men are always at Tehraun with the Shah, and, I believe, are paid from the royal treasury. The remainder are supposed to be in readiness to march when required: meanwhile they live with

their families, and follow their usual occupations. They are exempt from taxation, and each man's pay is ten tomauns a year. This, however, is merely nominal, for, though more than half the revenue is withheld from the Shah for the purpose, it would not nearly suffice if it were thus applied; and, moreover, what is retained is generally kept by the officers.

The language of the peasantry is the Persian, but many also speak a dialect of the Turkish.

There are several branches of different wandering tribes* to be found in Mauzunderoon, who have renounced their old migratory habits, and, having given up their tents, are scattered about in various villages and towns. Their whole number is said to amount to about fifty thousand, and they furnish the cavalry force of the province—some five thousand men. They are all exempt from taxation in consideration of this military service.

The productions of Mauzunderoon are chiefly rice, sugar, cotton, a little silk, and a variety of fruits. I found no one who could give me any information as to their yearly produce; sometimes guesses were made, but these differed so widely, that they only served to show that nothing was really known. Rice, however, is produced in great quantities: it is of four qualities; the amberboo; zarek or gherdeh; serdeh; and shawdek. The amberboo is most esteemed, and its present price was three kurrauns for ten mauns-tabreez (equal to 3*s.* for 65 lbs. English): the remaining three

* See Appendix (C.)

qualities bear one value, two kurrauns and fifteen shahees (2*s.* 9*d.* for 65 lbs). These prices were considered high, the amberboo being sometimes as low as two kurrauns. Great quantities are sent to Tehraun, Gheelaun, Casveen, Tabreez, and Russia; and it forms also the principal food of the inhabitants. The sugar is mostly consumed in the province; a considerable portion, however, is exported to Gheelaun, and some to Russia. The cotton is used in native manufactures, and some is also sent to Gheelaun; the price was between seven and eight tomauns per khalwar of forty mauns-tabreez, or 3*l.* 10*s.* and 4*l.* for 260 lbs. The silk is comparatively in small quantity, and of inferior quality to that of Gheelaun; it is used in native manufactures mixed with cotton. Beans, wheat, and barley are grown in the mountainous districts, and some flax in the lowlands. During the winter a great many labourers come from the upper country, and are employed here; their wages at this season is about sixpence a day.

The principal fruits are a great variety of the orange, lemon, and citron species, with most of which I am totally unacquainted. The Persian names of some of them are as follows:—

Tousourk.

Nawrenghee—the mandarin orange.

Bawdreng—a very large kind of citron, with a knotty, rough, and thick rind.

Minaw—a fruit in shape something like a pear, and of a pleasant acid; the colour both inside and outside is that of a lemon.

Limou—sweet and sour lemons.

Nawrinje—a bitter orange like the Seville.

Tonsabz
Bawleng
Tawbesh Ghawbee
Dawrawbee
Toureng
} varieties of the above-named fruits.

Sultaun Murrekebat—a shaddock, I believe; rather a rare fruit, sometimes weighing six or seven pounds.

These are all evergreens, and in winter give a lively and cheerful appearance to the gardens, which are filled with them. A great quantity of aub-i-nawrinje, the juice of some of the species, expressed and put into bottles, is sent to the interior, and is used in making sherbets. Besides these fruits, there are to be found apples, pomegranates, quinces, pears, peaches, walnuts, grapes, and melons. The vines are seen climbing the trunks of the forest-trees, and their stems are sometimes eight and ten inches in diameter. The appearance of the melons is here the reverse of those of the upper provinces of Persia: the water-melon of Mauzunderoon being long, and of a greenish yellow, like the ordinary bread-melon; while the bread-melon is a round, dark, mottled, green fruit, like most water-melons.

The revenue of the province amounts altogether to about 105,000 tomauns; of this sum,

70,000 are given in tweel to various officers for the payment of the troops and for their own salaries.

7,000 are the salary of the Prince and family.
2,000 are the salary of the Beglerbeg of Saree, Abbas Khan.
26,000 are given away in berauts and pensions to persons who have no connection with the province.

105,000

Nothing whatever goes to the treasury; and I have heard it said that money is paid out of it on account of Mauzunderoon, though for what and in what manner it was not easy to discover.

The administration is entirely in the hands of Ardeshir Meerza, and all the governors of the different districts are appointed by him, with the exception of Abbas Khan, the Beglerbeg of Saree, and Habeboollah Khan, the Governor of Tennacorben, Kellauristauk, and Coojoor. The Prince appears to be generally liked, and the condition of the peasantry seems to be better than that of the Gheelaunees; but of course this varies in different places, according to the character and disposition of the sub-governors or landowners.

There are two roads to Tehraun; one by Ferooz-koo, which is forty-five fursucks (180 miles), and the other by Lorijan, thirty-six fursucks (144 miles): both are tolerably good. The roads of the interior are a trifle better than those of Gheelaun, but still are bad enough to occasion great fatigue and the destruction of the horses. The only tolerable route, and which is always adopted by muleteers when possible, lies along the sands on the sea-shore; but

experienced guides are necessary to point out the fords of the numerous rivers, which are full of quicksands; and the fatigue of crossing these streams may be conceived when the number of them between Langarood and the Harrauz amounted to one hundred and thirty-six. In the autumn all are comparatively small, though some are even then rapid and above the horses' girths; but in the summer many of them become tremendous torrents, and are not passable at all near the shore.

These rivers are all well stocked with fish, which, with rice, are the principal food of the peasantry, and which, when salted, are sent to Tehraun and most other towns of the North of Persia. The following are the names of some of them:—

Orenje—represented as a very large fish.

Ispek.

Azad-mahee—Caspian salmon and lake trout.

Sefeed-mahee—a kind of mullet.

Kepour—carp.

Zeledge.

Kizzil-ala—trout.

Seg-mahee—literally "dog-fish," as the Persians call the sturgeon.

Soame—a fish common to the Russian rivers.

I have no idea of what the Orenje, Ispek, or Zeledge are, never having seen any. There are also several other kinds of fish, of the names of which I am ignorant.

The climate of Mauzunderoon may be called a wet one; nevertheless it is far preferable to that of Gheelaun. The summers are very hot, and the

sudden changes of weather occasion disease. The winter was delightful, though the present was perhaps too fair a specimen; nevertheless, from all I heard, I should think that fine weather generally predominates. It seldom rains without intermission for more than three or four days together, whereas in Gheelaun it sometimes pours for a month; the air also is less pernicious than that of the last-named province, the country not being so thickly wooded. The inhabitants in some parts, particularly among the mountains, are fine sturdy fellows; but those near the sea, in the low and swampy districts, have a sallow and sickly appearance.

Judging from what I have heard or read, the southern shores of the Caspian bear a striking likeness to India in many respects. The climate is similar; the impenetrable jungle, and many vegetable productions, rice, sugar, and cotton, are common to both countries. There are the same wild animals, among which is the royal tiger; and there is a tradition that elephants formerly existed in Mauzunderoon. The domestic cattle are of the humped species. The general style of building is the same. The natives have the Indian custom of carrying burdens over their shoulders by means of a stick, which I have not seen elsewhere either in Turkey or Persia; and, I have no doubt, a person who has lived in India would discover many other points of resemblance.

Jan. 2nd. This morning we received an invitation from our landlord's son to accompany him on a boar-hunting expedition, which we accepted, and

started immediately after breakfast. It had been arranged that we should meet the hunters and beaters at a small village, the property of his father, about two miles from the town, and thither we proceeded; the road lying along the serpentine course of the river Bawbil. The water is muddy, and the banks occasionally rise precipitately, forming a clayey cliff some forty feet above the surface of the stream. We forded it in one place where it was about eighty yards broad, but in the deepest part not above the horses' girths. On arriving at the village we found a number of ferocious-looking dogs, and men not less so, armed with boar-spears and match-locks, which I thought little likely to do any execution, not then knowing the skill with which the natives use them. All being prepared, we set out. Some very likely places were tried during the day, but with no success; the only game we saw being a few pheasants, and these no one shot at.

In the evening we went to dine with the Prince. We were shown into the same room as on our first visit, and found his royal highness seated on a small rickety chair, at the head of the Russian table before mentioned. It was covered with various nondescript little dishes, and saucers of pickles, chiefly garlic; there were also two water-bottles of sherbet, two black bottles conspicuously marked "London Stout," one of which, however, contained rum, and several square decanters of Persian wine. Four glass candlesticks of Russian or German manufacture occupied the corners; they were ticketed

just as they came from the shop; the tallow ran in streams upon the table from the candles, which were all of different lengths; and, there being no such convenience as a pair of snuffers, Abbas Kooly Meerza, who sat at the Shahzadeh's right, occasionally snuffed them with his fingers, which he wiped on the skirts of his dress.

Before commencing the business of the evening, the Shahzadeh said, he hoped I had not forgotten to bring my drawings, and begged to see them. He was somewhat disappointed, having expected to find them coloured; but he was pleased with the sketch of the Baugh-i-Shah, which he recognised immediately. He then exhibited some of his own performances. One of them was a wild duck, remarkable for the brilliancy of its plumage and its gigantic dimensions, as compared with a house two stories high, which stood close to the edge of the puddle in which the bird was swimming. There were also some pretty fair paintings of flowers; and a most singular landscape, in which a shepherd was represented playing a flageolet to a number of apoplectic sheep with bow legs,—those in the remote distance among the mountains being precisely the same size as those in the foreground. The total ignorance of all proportion or perspective displayed in Persian paintings is exceedingly laughable. In flowers they succeed best; but even here, if a bulbul (nightingale) be introduced, it is sure to be either much too large, or else about four times as small as the rose-bud near which it may be perched.

A series of different dishes was now brought in

by the young Princes in waiting: first, some devilled bones; then, after an interval of twenty minutes or half an hour, another dish of the same description; and so on till about twelve o'clock, when dinner was announced, which I thought would have been finished long since, as we had been eating since seven o'clock; but I found that all this was only intended as a whet to our appetites. The dinner, however, consisted simply of a pillo and chillo, and was soon disposed of. Ardeshir Meerza was in high spirits, and laughed and chatted merrily, making occasionally most vigorous applications to the rum-bottle. His band of musicians and a singer were in attendance, who kept up an incessant strumming and shouting from the time of our arrival to that of our departure, near two o'clock in the morning. There were three instrumental performers: one had a kind of drum, which he beat with his fingers; another played a mandolin; and a third a stringed instrument, placed on the ground before him, striking the cords with two small sticks. Persian singing seldom possesses any melody; and its excellence seems to consist in noise, and the most violent contortions of the visage, and exertions of the lungs in various shakes and roulades. The instrumental music is, at best, droning and monotonous, and often most discordant. It is curious, when the musicians are expert, to hear them for the first time, and for a few minutes; but the inevitable consequence of a prolonged performance is a head-ache. The black who played the little drum occasionally danced, if the

term may be applied to what was merely a series of indecent postures and grimaces.

The scene was rather amusing as a novelty. The Prince's great delight was to tease and pull the beard of one Daoud Meerza, who sat near him on the ground. This man, a sullen, dark-looking fellow, the toady of the Prince and the butt of his jests, is the son of the Zil-i-Sultaun (shadow of the Sultan), so called from his extreme likeness to Fath Ali Shah. On the death of that monarch, the Zil-i-Sultaun was governor of Tehraun, and, having obtained possession of the royal treasure, proclaimed himself king, under the title of Adil Shah. He appears, however, to have been a complete imbecile; for although master of the treasury, in a country where anything may be done by the power of money, and where no one has any scruples as to the manner in which he uses that power, he only retained possession of the throne for thirty or forty days. When the present Shah's army approached Tehraun, the Beglerbeg of the town was ordered to apprehend Adil Shah; and, entering his presence in his own palace, walked up to him with the usual obeisance, and said, "May it please your Majesty, you are my prisoner!" Zil-i-Sultaun scratched his head, stared, and looked rather puzzled; but at length coolly replied, "Bussior khoob; very good, very good! I suppose I am—perhaps it is as well that I should be. It is my destiny!" and surrendered, without the slightest attempt at resistance. He was confined in the fortress at Ardebeel, from

whence he afterwards escaped by digging through the mud-walls, and fled to Georgia in company with two other princes, Almackee Meerza, the Rookhn-i-doulet (tower of the state), and Imaum-verdi Meerza.

Towards one o'clock, it being mentioned that we intended to go to Meshed-i-sir on the morrow, the Prince called for his Meerza, and ordered him to write a letter to ensure us good accommodation; and told our head-servant to send in the morning, and he would furnish us with rum and wine for our journey. Dinner having been protracted to a tedious length, we departed; the Shahzadeh inviting us to dine with him again on our return from Meshed-i-sir.

CHAPTER XI.

Road to Meshed-i-sir. — Sheep. — Meshed-i-sir. — The Trade. — Sturgeon Fishery.—Method of catching Wild Fowl.—Duck Shooting.—The Imaumzadeh Ibrahim.—Dine again with the Prince.—Abbas Kooly Khan.—The Amusements of the Evening.—Miserable Condition of our Horses.—The Prince and Court intoxicated at Mid-day.—Road to Alleeabad.—Alleeabad.—Departure.—The Causeway.—Beautiful Scenery.—Surkeh-kellaw.—The Causeway again.—Arrive at Saree.—The Palace.—Description of Saree.—Fortifications.—Ancient Buildings.—The Goombuz-i-Selm-i-Toor. — Aub-ambars. — The Bazars.—The Streets.—Caravanserais.—Trade.—Tribes inhabiting Saree.

On the morning of the 3rd, we started for Meshed-i-sir. The road, which was comparatively good and dry, lay in general along the banks of the Bawbil. We passed several bean-fields, and also saw some flax; a considerable quantity of which is produced here, and both used in native linen manufactures, and sent to various parts of Persia and Astrachan. There is but little cotton, and no rice or sugar cultivated in the immediate neighbourhood, on account of a scarcity of water; the Bawbil lying too far below the level of the country to be used for the purposes of irrigation, and there being no other large streams in the vicinity. The country appeared well populated; and we passed through four large villages, one called Humza Koolla, one Ameer

Koolla, and the two others both named Bauzinar. Near Meshed-i-sir we saw many flocks of sheep, which belonged to the Eeliauts, who bring them down to the lowlands to pasture during the winter, and return with them to the mountains in the summer. The sheep were of the short-tailed breed; the fat-tailed species not thriving in these wooded and damp provinces. They have several times been brought here, but have invariably sickened and died in a few months. We arrived at Meshed-i-sir early in the afternoon, and found that very tolerable lodgings had been prepared, in compliance with the Prince's orders, which had preceded us. The distance from Borfroosh is three fursucks.

Having inspected our apartments, we sallied forth to see the place. Before we had walked many hundred yards, we were overtaken by Aga Meer Bozurk, the customer and head-man of the village, accompanied by one Hadgee Meer Aboo Talib, who was here on leave of absence from the Russian university at Cazan, where he is professor of Persian: they joined us, and we strolled together towards the place where goods are landed. There are a few sheds on the eastern bank, and several large single-masted boats were busily employed in unloading their cargoes, just brought from a Russian vessel lately arrived, which lay off the mouth of the river. The ground was strewed with various packages, blocks and plates of copper, kegs of butter, cases of kalleoon bottles; painted boxes filled with hardware, glassware, or Russian manufactures, and num-

bers of iron caldrons destined for the Toorcomans. It seemed odd that the latter articles were not rather shipped direct to Astrabad, but we were told that there were few or no merchants there to receive them; and, as the land-carriage from hence was very cheap, this was altogether the most convenient place for debarkation.

This village, the only port of Mauzunderoon, consists of about one hundred and fifty meanly built houses, situated at the mouth of the Bawbil. Ships of burden are not able to enter the river, but remain about two miles in the offing, and their cargoes are landed in the above-mentioned boats. The revenue collected from the district and village of Meshed-i-sir amounts altogether to about 3700 tomauns, of which about 2700 are derived from the custom-house; the remainder is from some irregular taxes.

The trade is principally with Russia, through Astrachan. The goods imported from that place are iron, copper, hardware, loaf-sugar, painted boxes, dyewoods, glassware, china and paper. No regular accounts are kept of the yearly quantities of these different articles; and the customer, though he most likely knew pretty accurately the general amount, evidently wished to say as little as possible on the subject, and professed ignorance. The whole trade, however, only employs annually from four to five ships of between an hundred and thirty and an hundred and sixty tons' burden. From Bakoo three or four large boats arrive every year with naphtha, and

some is also brought from Cheriken, on the Toorcoman coast; but it is of inferior quality, and the colour is lighter than that from Bakoo.

We were told that about 24,000 poots of the following productions and manufactures were annually exported to Astrachan.

Cotton, rice, and a little sugar, from the province.

Galls, from Hamadan.

Dried fruits, from all the interior.

Prints and manufactures, from Isphahaun.

Kerbauz, a coarse native manufacture of Mauzunderoon.

Bedornah, pips of the wild quince used in medicine.

Rice and sugar are also exported to Gheelaun in great quantities, both from Meshed-i-sir and all the rivers along the coast, in large boats.

The duty levied on both imports and exports is the same; being on iron and dried fruits four shahees thirty dinars per poot, and for all other merchandise seven shahees thirty dinars. The dinar is an imaginary coin, of which, I believe, there are a thousand to a shahee.

There is a small fishery of the sturgeon at the mouth of the river, which is rented, with several others along this coast, by an Armenian named Stepan, who resides chiefly at Ferrabad on the Thedjin, where is the principal fishery.

We had heard that a curious method of catching wild fowl at night by means of a torch was practised here, and wished very much to have witnessed it this evening; but unfortunately the moon shone

brightly, and it could only be managed on the darkest nights. In the morning, however, having risen early with the intention of shooting some ducks, we were shown the whole apparatus, which was very ingenious. Two men and a boy embark in a small canoe. One man sits astern and directs it; the boy is placed in the centre with a small circular plate of bell-metal, which he beats with rapidly repeated blows of a stick; and the other man stands

in the fore-part of the boat, behind an apparatus fitting into the bows, made of wood and felt, having a little hearth of clay on which the fire is placed, the fuel being some tow or cotton dipped in naphtha. Behind the fire is a screen, which bends forwards, throwing the light entirely on the water before the boat, and casting all surrounding objects into deeper darkness. The ducks, frightened by the noise and dazzled by the glare, remain motionless

on the surface. The man behind the screen holds in his hand a net, fixed so as to hang loosely between two long and stout canes: this he claps over his astonished victims, and, giving it a sudden turn in the water, lifts them out; when, holding the canes upright, they fall into the bag of the net. The moment the splash is heard, the remainder of the ducks rise; and at first flying about bewildered, sometimes into the light, and sometimes against the men in the boat, finally contrive to make a retreat to some other spot. Meanwhile, the sportsman quickly takes those he has caught from the net, and twisting their wings one in the other, and their legs over their backs, throws them into the bottom of the boat, and moves off in pursuit of another flock. It will perhaps be thought that twisting the birds' necks, instead of their wings and legs, would be both a quicker and surer mode of disposing of them; but the latter operation is performed with incredible rapidity, and it is to be remembered that each duck must have its throat cut in the orthodox manner, with its head towards Mecca for the good of its soul, or it would not be proper food for a correct Mussulman.

We were told that one of these boats would often, on a favourable night, bring in as many as fifty wild fowl; the greater part being bald coots, with which the swamps abound. There are twelve or thirteen boats here; and, the place not possessing much cultivation, they furnish the principal part of the subsistence of the inhabitants. A pair of bald coots sell for about $2\frac{3}{4}d.$, and a couple of ducks for

$3\frac{1}{2}d$. The manner of lifting the birds out of the water was exemplified by oranges, which represented the ducks. We afterwards embarked, each in a separate boat, and accompanied by our friends of the previous evening, the Hadgee and the customer, proceeded to the open moordaubs to see what could be effected by powder and shot.

We found immense quantities of wild fowl, the water being literally blackened with them; but they were exceedingly difficult of approach, as they rose whenever the boats came within an hundred yards of them. Perceiving this, I separated from the party, and ran my canoe into a clump of high reeds; where being concealed, the ducks flew over me in myriads, but so close that I continually missed them. I killed several, which I found to be widgeon of different kinds; but, my ammunition being soon exhausted, I returned homewards. On my way I fell in with the rest of the party, and was exceedingly surprised to see how well the old professor and the customer handled their clumsy match-locks. They each killed fifteen or twenty bald coots, all flying shots. These birds allow themselves to be approached much nearer than the ducks.

The sea is said to have receded here very considerably during the last six years. The backwater has consequently decreased, and the people complained of a comparative scarcity of wild fowl.

The only building of any kind of interest at Meshed-i-sir is a small brick Imaumzadeh, with a conical spire, standing on the brink of the swamp, and at a distance looking very much like an English

country church. It is the burial-place of Imaum Ibrahim, brother of the Imaum Reza, also called the Imaumi-jewaúb (Imaum of the answer), from a story of his having, when on a visit to the tomb of Mohamed at Mecca, received from the shrine an audible answer of "Aleikoom Salaam," in return for the "Salaam Aleikoom" with which he saluted it.

As we were engaged this evening to dine again with Ardeshir Meerza, we had no more time to delay here, and, having despatched a late breakfast, left Meshed-i-sir at about half after one o'clock.

During our ride back to Borfroosh we started several jackals; but our dogs could not catch them, on account of the jungle. There are immense numbers of these animals everywhere in Gheelaun and Mauzunderoon; they are taken here in traps by the Russians for the sake of their skins.

As rain fell while on the road, we arrived at Borfroosh nearly wet through: however, the weather soon cleared up again, and we rode over to the Baugh-i-Shah.

The dinner was a repetition of that of the former evening, but even more tedious, since it had not novelty to recommend it; and the misery of sitting at table on a small rush-bottomed kitchen-chair, without stirring from seven in the evening till three in the morning, is much easier imagined than described. Just as we were seated, Abbas Kooly Khan, Sirdar (General), the chief of Lorijan, came in: he was invited to join us, and sat on the ground beside Daoud Meerza. The General was a fine handsome man, and seemed very merry and fond of

fun. The Shahzadeh was also in high spirits, which increased in proportion as the contents of the rum-bottle decreased; and the chief amusement of both himself and his guests was, as before, making a butt of Daoud Meerza. Abbas Kooly Khan would endeavour to keep him in earnest conversation, while the Prince stuck goose-quills in his cap, and encouraged the young imps of Princes, who were waiting at table, to pin pieces of paper to his dress. At last Daoud pretended to be annoyed, and, starting from the ground, made a rush to the door, exclaiming, "What dirt have I eaten that I came here? Wahi! Wahi!" The servants were told to hold him, and bring him back; and a great scuffle ensued, in which all rolled on the floor, and nearly upset the dinner-table, to the great amusement of the party. All this, and the various jokes cut upon him and his answers thereto, kept the Prince, the General, and Abbas Kooly Meerza in one continual roar of laughter the whole evening. During dinner a live jackal, taken in a trap, was brought in. We asked Ardeshir Meerza what he intended to do with it. "Oh," he replied, "I don't know: sometimes we cut them in pieces with our swords, and sometimes we rub them over with naphtha and set fire to them." An approving buzz went round at the mention of this last humane pastime, and the naphtha appeared to be the decided fate of the unfortunate victim before us; but on our intercession, which seemed quite incomprehensible to some of our friends, the Shahzadeh promised that the beast should be killed in a less cruel manner, and on the

morrow we saw its skin in the bazar, its throat having been cut. In the meantime, however, it was necessary to prevent its escape, and Abbas Kooly Meerza rising from table sewed up its eyes; which operation being performed to his entire satisfaction, he resumed his seat.

This little incident had for a moment interrupted the boisterous merriment of the party, but it was soon renewed with increased spirit: endless successions of paper pigtails were affixed to the unhappy Daoud; quills were stuck in his cap, till he was tired with making resistance; and the room shook with the loud and reiterated peals of laughter. As I looked on the absurd scene, it was difficult to regard the Prince, his General, and the master of ceremonies as more than a pack of bearded children, and I rather wondered that they were not ashamed of making such an exhibition of themselves before strangers; but something must be attributed to the numerous empty bottles lying either on or under the table. We were delighted when all was over, and returned home, devoutly hoping never more to be subjected to such dinner-parties.

Jan. 6. This morning we had intended to start for Saree, but postponed our departure a day longer, as our head-groom represented that our horses would be much better for another day's rest. Out of ten or eleven riding-horses, there were not more than three or four without sore backs, as the stuffing of our saddles, from pressure and damp, had become as hard as a board; and, as soon as one sore healed, a fresh one made its appearance. Some of the ani-

mals' legs too, as high as the knees, were entirely denuded of hair, from the continual deep mud; though I imagine this was caused more by the constant endeavours of the grooms to keep them clean, than by any peculiar quality of the clay itself.

During the course of the afternoon we sent our head-servant to the Baugh-i-Shah, to inquire about the man to be appointed to accompany us to Astrabad. Hussein's astonishment, however, was unspeakable at finding the Prince and his whole court profoundly drunk! The guide, however, made his appearance in the evening.

Jan. 7. Just as we had made our preparations for departure, we received a farewell visit from Abbas Kooly Meerza; and having repeatedly thanked him for his own kindness, and the flattering attentions of the Shahzadeh, we started at about twelve o'clock for Alleeabad, a village about halfway between Borfroosh and Saree. The road lay through alternate jungle and rice-fields, along the remains of Shah Abbas' famous causeway. This, for an occasional two or three hundred yards, was almost as good as new; but the remainder was broken up, or, wherever it had been disused for a short time, totally overgrown by the encroaching jungle, and the path turned aside among the neighbouring swamps, as each passenger found it most practicable. At about ten miles from Borfroosh we forded the river Torlor, now almost dry: the bed is nearly three hundred and fifty yards across.

After a ride of twelve miles, fatiguing to the horses on account of the deep mud, we entered

Alleeabad. It is said to contain about four hundred houses; but only a few stalls forming a bazar, surrounded by some miserable huts, are visible. The village belongs to Allayah Khan, an uncle of the Shah, and the present governor of Khorassaun. We were obliged to lodge here in a most miserable little room, a chamber in a small gateway leading to an ugly Imaumzadeh of Ussuf, a brother of the Imaum Reza. It was the most diminutive apartment we had as yet inhabited, and there was hardly space to spread our beds. We were somewhat consoled, however, when we learned that poor Colonel Stoddart, Major Tod, and Dr. Bell had all three managed to pass a night in the same place, though it was difficult to conceive how.

Jan. 8. We left Alleeabad at about a quarter to ten, and proceeded along the causeway for about four miles, when we came to the river Seearoo, a small stream, which we crossed by means of a bridge. Wherever there have been water-courses, there have been originally bridges, which in most places are now destroyed; and it is in these parts that the causeway is so broken up: during to-day's march, it was in much better condition than between Alleeabad and Borfroosh. It is of different widths in different places, but generally about twenty feet, with a ditch on each side. In one place I measured forty-five feet between the ditches; but these were considerably beyond the edge of the actual pavement, which was not more than twenty feet.

After passing the Seearoo we turned off into the forest, and, having crossed several large patches of

rice-swamp, arrived at the village of Afra Koote, the property of the Governor of Khorassaun; and three miles further on we came to Arateh, belonging to a government scribe at Astrabad. They are both large, straggling places; and the latter is beautifully situated at the foot of the hills, where the scenery very much reminded me of some of the wooded districts of England, except that the magnificent mountains in the back-ground far surpassed anything to be seen there. The low hills in the immediate vicinity, covered with trees, among which the beech was conspicuous, still retaining its brown leaves—the well-regulated fields, neatly enclosed with wattled hedges—the crops of barley, wheat, and beans, newly springing up—and the green open slopes, dotted with flocks of grazing sheep, altogether formed a lovely scene, particularly grateful to us after the close and damp forest, or the still more dreary and monotonous extents of rice-swamps, through which we had lately been travelling. The sun shone brightly, and the day was warm as in England at Midsummer; hardly a cloud was to be seen, and all was cheerful and gay. Our guide, a funny little old fellow, was jogging on ahead, spouting away, much to his own edification, from Saadi or Hafiz. We should think it curious in England to hear a coachman or a ploughman repeating Scott or Byron: but the Persians are naturally fond of poetry and romance; and, by hearing the verses of their favourite bards frequently recited or sung in their caravanserais and cafés by wandering minstrels, the lowest of the people learn a great deal by heart.

The idiosyncrasy of our own peasantry is not poetical; and if you pass by one of their cafés—a public-house,—you will most likely hear a rousing chorus, the most striking part of which is "right fol de riddle dol, de-riddle day,"—which I take to be the soul of all the music or poetry of the lower classes at home.

Near the village of Arateh I observed that the fields which had been lately planted with beans were covered with small twigs placed upright, from which a kind of net-work of thin white twine was crossed and recrossed in every direction to keep off the crows. It had a curious appearance, looking like a huge spider's web. I noticed also several fields of sugar-cane still uncut. Continuing our march over a beautiful smooth turf along the foot of the hills, we passed the village of Surkeh Kellaw: here all was in preparation for sowing wheat, and numerous teams of oxen were employed in ploughing and harrowing.

The peasantry near and among the mountains eat bread, which is not to be found nearer the sea, except in large towns; the principal food being rice and fish. Some distance farther on, at about two miles from Saree, we again fell in with the causeway, along which we continued till we arrived at the city, altogether about three fursucks distant from Alleeabad. The causeway is here about twenty feet wide and in good condition; it is not paved, as before, but has the appearance of a good English country-road. Hanway, or his printer, has made a mistake between feet and yards, in stating it to be twenty yards wide.

We had sent our Gholaum to see about quarters, and on arriving at Saree were met by five or six feroshes, sent by the Shahzadeh's Vekeel to clear the way, and to conduct us to the palace, where we were to take up our lodgings. After a fruitless search for a comfortable room, we were obliged to content ourselves with a side-chamber of the principal divan-khaneh. There was a door or two wanting, and no glass in the greater part of the windows; the former, however, were procured from some other room, and as a substitute for the latter we had recourse to brown paper. This building is part of a palace erected by Aga Mohamed Khan, who established himself at Saree when he fled from Shirauz on the death of Kurreem Khan. It is described by Fraser as ornamented with various pictures, for which we looked in vain; and, on inquiring, were told that the General, Abbas Kooly Khan, whom we met at Borfroosh the last evening we dined with Ardeshir Meerza, was one night lodged here with some of his soldiers when the place accidentally caught fire. Some gunpowder they had with them exploded during the conflagration and blew off the roof, leaving little but the bare walls standing. The present structure is of brick, and was erected by Ardeshir Meerza on the plan of the former one, but without any interior decorations; some of the chambers are stuccoed, though most of them appear to have been left unfinished, and are already falling to pieces. In front of the divan-khaneh, which is still used as the audience-hall of the Prince, is a garden of orange, cypress, plane,

and other trees; among which a fine old palm stands conspicuous, the only one I have seen in this part of Persia. In the centre is a long narrow stone reservoir, partially filled with stagnant water, and furnished with a row of jets, which, however, have long ceased to play; and immediately opposite is a large ruinous pile over the gateway. Neither this nor the rest of the palace makes any show externally, but it appears extensive, consisting of long low ranges of buildings, containing the anderoon, baths, stables, and servants' apartments. The whole is surrounded by a high brick wall, and, if I may judge of the remainder by the part I have seen, it is all rapidly going to ruin.

Saree is divided into six mahalehs or parishes, and is said to contain between six and seven thousand houses, though I should think the number rather overrated. It has seven medressehs. The cash revenue of the town only amounts to about five hundred tomauns, the greater part of the inhabitants being exempt from taxation as soldiers. The town has originally been surrounded by a ditch and wall about four miles in circumference, defended at intervals by square brick towers. The ditch has in some places a few feet of water, but it is generally dry; and its sides are so broken down, that there would be little difficulty in scrambling down one side and up the other. Except the gateways, very little of the wall exists: a part of it near the Borfroosh gate was repaired some twenty years since, and Fraser says that the work was intended to have been continued all round, but the repairs only

appear to have been extended a few hundred yards. Near the above-mentioned gate is a piece of an old wall, all that remains of the Imaumzadeh Ibrahim, which was thrown down by an earthquake about seventeen years ago. Not far distant is another tomb, of similar construction to what this must have been, still in tolerable preservation, called the Imaumzadeh Yaiyah. It is of excellent brickwork, and is square for some twenty feet high, when it becomes octangular, and then terminates in a conical spire, which has formerly been covered with blue glazed tiles, but only a patch of them here and there now remains. In the interior were three old chests of beautifully carved wood, containing the bones of the Imaumzadeh and some of his relations. These chests were covered with dust, and no care seemed to be taken either of them or of the building, which is entirely open, and occasionally used as a shed for cattle. Yaiyah and Ibrahim were sons of the Imaum Reza.

Fraser supposes that these structures, with one called the Goombuz-i-Selm-i-Toor, must have been those taken by Hanway for the temples of the ancient fire-worshippers: but Hanway could not have made such a palpable mistake; and, moreover, he distinctly describes his four temples of the Guebres "rotund, as of about thirty feet diameter, raised in height to a point near a hundred and twenty feet," whereas these are partly square, and not more than fifty feet high. The Goombuz-i-Selm-i-Toor, however, a structure which is described to have been precisely what Hanway writes, was probably the last

remaining of the four temples he mentions, and is now no longer in existence. The greater part was destroyed by the earthquake already alluded to; and some years afterwards Mohamed Kooly Meerza, then Governor of Mauzunderoon, ordered the destruction of the remainder. The spot where it formerly stood is in the middle of the town; a small house is built on part of its site, and the whole is shut out from the street by a wall enclosing the owner's premises, and connecting them with the adjoining houses. We were shown the place, but no trace of the tower is left, save some heaps of rubbish; and, in a few years more, the former existence of such a building will most probably be forgotten by the inhabitants. It was supposed here to have been of high antiquity, and the burial-place of the heads of Selm and Toor, two sons of Feridoon, a famous Païshdadian monarch, surnamed "I Furrokh" or "the Fortunate," whose latter days were embittered by their quarrels. They murdered their younger brother Erij, whose death was avenged by Manuchehar, his son—he having slain his uncles in battle, and caused their heads to be cut off and interred in this place; and the monument erected over them was called the Goombuz-i-Selm-i-Toor, or the Tower of Selm and Toor. No ancient building is now to be found in Saree, save the Imaumzadeh Yaiyah.

There are ten or fifteen aub-ambars. These are reservoirs for water, dug deep in the earth, and covered with a thick, domed roof, just appearing above ground. They are filled in the winter, and some salt is thrown in, to preserve the water; which, being kept cool during the intense heats of summer,

is then used by the inhabitants. The entrance is through a low archway, by an abrupt flight of steps. These aub-ambars are open to all, having been constructed as works of charity by different individuals; and their convenience is found to be such, that, where almost everything else is allowed to go to ruin, they are always kept in good repair.

The bazars are said to contain about three hundred and fifty shops; but, from my own observations, I should think there were more. Forty of these belong to dealers in manufactured goods; a like number to bakers. The bread here is consumed by the Toorks, Koords, and other strangers, who compose the majority of the population of Saree; as the native peasant, accustomed to a rice diet, is unable to digest bread, "and," said my informant, "dies, if he eats it for two days together." The remainder of the shops are green-grocers, corn-dealers, saddlers, confectioners, cap-makers, shoe-makers, smiths, and other trades. The shops are tolerably built, and in some places the passage between the rows is covered with a roof, in others it is open.

Nearly all the streets are paved, and are the best I have seen in any town in this part of Persia. They were made by a son of Fath Ali Shah, Mohamed Kooly Meerza, who preceded Ardeshir Meerza in the government of Mauzunderoon, which he held for the extraordinary period of thirty-six years, seemingly with moderation and justice. He also made several gardens, and otherwise improved the town. He is now at Hamadan, living on a small pension from Government. One or two of the principal streets had lately been capitally repaired;

some have sewers underneath, but the smaller ones are made sloping towards a gutter running along their centre; occasionally they are broken up and deep in mud, but these places are comparatively few. Altogether there was at Saree an appearance of life and bustle that we did not expect to see: the bazars are in much better repair than those of Borfroosh; and, though the shops are not so large, there is a more active and business-like air about them, and the state of the town in general does credit to the Governor.

There are four caravanserais, one of which is in excellent repair, has a neat garden, with a tank and fountain in the centre, and is occupied by some of the chief merchants. Two of the remaining three are insignificant, and half in ruins; and the other is in process of being repaired. There are about fifty merchants in Saree, who carry on a small trade direct with Tehraun and Astrabad, though the wants of the town are chiefly supplied from Borfroosh. Both the imports and exports are the same as of that city.

The following are the names of the tribes inhabiting Saree, and who were brought here by Nadir Shah and Aga Mohamed Khan. The Osanloo (Toork, from Azerbijan); the Kellidgelee, from Khorassaun; and the Belooche and Affghaun, from their respective countries. There are very few Koords in the town, the greater part dwelling in the surrounding villages.

Saree is seven days' journey (carvan) from Tehraun.

CHAPTER XII.

Receive Visits. — The Aid-i-cadar.—A Persian Garden. — Seed-time and harvest in Mauzunderoon.—Bridge over the Thedjin. —Dervishes at Saree.—Linen Manufactures.—A Physiognomist. —Visit the Vekeel.—System of Education in Persia.—Leave Saree.—Road to Ferrabad.—Arrival at Ferrabad.—Quarters.— Pleasure-house of Shah Abbas.—Trade of Ferrabad.—Poverty of the Inhabitants.—Sturgeon Fisheries of Mauzunderoon.— Their total Produce. — Carp, Sefeed-mahee, and Azad-mahee Fishery.—Departure from Ferrabad.—Prevailing winds on the Coast.—Road to Karatuppeh.—Tumuli.—Karatuppeh.—View from the top of the Mound.—Regarding the Affghauns in Mauzunderoon. — Bad Water. — Ruins at Shah-keelaw. — Late Arrival of our Baggage.

Jan. 9. THIS morning, after breakfast, which was sent to us by the Vekeel, who is a little boy, the son of Abbas Kooly Khan, the Prince's Vizier, we received a visit from Mohamed Hadgee Khan (the acting Vekeel), Mohamed Kerrim Khan, and several of their friends. The last-named is chief of the Affghauns in Mauzunderoon: he was a very civil, agreeable old gentleman, and pressed us much to go to his village of Karatuppeh, which lay on our road to Astrabad, saying, that if he could not be there himself, he would write to his son to show us every hospitality and attention.

To-day was the Aid-i-cadar* (feast of command or

* The word "cadar" has very many various meanings. The

ordination). According to the Persians, it is the anniversary of the day when the prophet Mohamed, seated on a throne of camel-skins, received intimation from heaven to name Allee his successor. It is kept a general holiday; and, almost every one having gone out of town, we determined to do so likewise. About twelve o'clock, therefore, we rode to a garden near the palace, planted by Mohamed Kooly Meerza. This, like all Persian gardens, was surrounded by a high wall, and laid out in straight walks, bordered with rows of cypress and orange trees. There were also one or two firs, which had been brought from the highlands. The fruit-trees were apples, peaches, pears, cherries, pomegranates, and several species of oranges, lemons, and citrons. In the centre of the garden was a summer-house in a melancholy state of dilapidation, but which was sometimes still used by the Prince. Passing through a ruinous gateway, we entered another garden, belonging to the anderoon. It was almost entirely occupied by a large stone tank, full of water, edged with a paved walk, planted on the outside with orange-trees. We went into the building appropriated to the women, which was completely in ruins; in many places the roof had fallen in, and the floors

Turkish idea is that on this day the good and bad angels who are attendant on every man give up the books in which they have respectively written his actions during the past year, and receive fresh books, together with a knowledge of what he is destined to do during the year now entered on. In this sense the Aid-i-cadar is the "feast of destiny." It is, however, not considered a feast by the Turks.

exhibited the bare beams and rafters. Ascending to the upper chamber of a square tower in the building, we obtained a lovely view of the surrounding country. The fields, enclosed by hedges and dotted with clumps of trees, gradually faded into the blue mist of distance; beyond which rose the chain of the Elburz, covered with snow, the sugar-loaf peak of Demawund, towering high above the rest of the range, while the grazing cattle and the stacks of rice contributed to give the whole scene a cheerful and civilized appearance.

From this garden we went to see the bridge over the Thedjin, situated about a mile and a half from the town on the eastern side. The road was dry, and led through fields, in which the wheat and barley were just beginning to appear above ground. In Mauzunderoon they sow in January, or the end of December, and the crop ripens and is cut in May; after which all but the native peasantry retire to the yeilauks, as the heat in summer is said to be intolerable to strangers.

We crossed over the bridge which was constructed by Aga Mohamed Khan, and is still in good repair. It is built entirely of brick, and fanciful designs are worked in the same material on the piers; it has seventeen arches, only three of which were occupied by the stream. A short distance beyond the bridge is an Imaumzadeh of Abbas, another of the Imaum Reza family, which must have been pretty numerous, for the tombs of sons and brothers are found all over the province. We did not visit it, as we were assured it differed in no respect from all the other Imaumzadehs we had seen.

After crossing the bridge, we proceeded down the stream along the eastern bank some three or four hundred yards, until we came upon the causeway, at which point we recrossed the river. Originally a bridge existed there, which, when decayed, was replaced by the one just described. Returning along the causeway, we entered the town through one of its old gateways. They say that earthquakes have greatly hastened the ruin of these defences, but the towers appear never to have been of any strength.

We then visited a large garden, planted by Aga Mohamed Khan, precisely similar to that before described. It being a holiday, the boys of the town were assembled here, and were amusing themselves with pelting the fruit at each other; the oranges, however, were all bitter, or they might have been treated with more respect. No care seemed to be taken of the place; the walls were in a dilapidated condition, and the branches of the trees broken down by the attempts made to reach the fruit.

In riding through the streets of Saree, the number of beggars and dervishes who present themselves at every turn is incredible; one might almost suppose the town to be peopled by them: every third man you meet salutes you with "Yah Allee! hak!" and stretches out his hand or his wallet for a tribute to his piety. There are immense numbers in all the towns of Gheelaun and Mauzunderoon; but the residence of the court, the general cheapness of provisions, and the mild and comparatively dry climate during the winter, seem to have induced them to give the preference to Saree as their head-quarters.

Jan. 10. During the night there was a perfect hurricane, but about nine o'clock this morning all was calm again, and the day proved lovely.

We were shown some very good linen manufactures, made here from flax grown in the province. They were evenly woven and nicely bleached, of different lengths and widths, and principally intended for girdles for the waist, women's headdresses, shirts, &c.; and there were a few square handkerchiefs. They were very high priced.

We were again visited by our friend the Affghaun Mohamed Kerrim Khan and some of his friends. One of them, a young poet, after staring at me incessantly for about a quarter of an hour, turned round to Mr. A. and said, that he was convinced by a peculiar expression of my eyes that I was a brother poet, and requested that I would do him the pleasure to recite some of my verses. I assured him, however, that he was quite mistaken, and that my genius was confined to prose. In the course of conversation we were told, that there were sportsmen here who were dexterous in shooting animals in the dark, being merely guided by the sound.

When our visitors had departed, we went to call upon the Vekeel, a nice little boy of about ten years old. On our entering the room in which he was seated, he rose, told us we were welcome, and inquired after our health with all the self-possession and gravity of a man. Having paid his compliments, however, we found that he had nothing further to say, and the conversation was kept up by his minister and his tutor, who were present. School-

masters are the same all the world over; and I could immediately have decided on the calling of the worthy pedagogue, who sat next me, from an indescribable something in his physiognomy. The system of education in this part of Persia, and, I believe, elsewhere, is as follows: When the child is about five or six years old, he is sent to school, or, if the son of a great man, generally has a private tutor. He is first taught to read the Koran and the works of some of the favourite poets, then to write, and also how to behave to superiors and inferiors, and other points of etiquette, which form a very important branch in Persian education. The boy is kept to these several studies with little intermission or recreation nearly all day. This discipline continues till he is about fourteen years of age, when he is taught to shoot, to ride, and other manly accomplishments, which are generally far more congenial to his tastes than his former employments; and at eighteen or twenty he is married. The schoolmaster now present received sixty tomauns (30*l.*) a-year as private tutor to the Beglerbeg's son. When boys are sent to school, which is something like an English day-school, the parents pay according to their means, from sixpence to a shilling per month.

Having concluded our visit, I strolled outside the town, and made a sketch of it: the evening was lovely; and the sun, just setting behind the mountains, threw a thousand beautiful tints over the landscape.

January 11th. Everything being prepared for

departure, we left Saree at eleven o'clock. It was market-day, and the streets were crowded with people flocking in from all the neighbouring villages. We marched slowly through the town, and it was curious to observe how wonderfully the body of feroshes, who walked in front to clear the way, had augmented; we usually had four or five, while to-day there could hardly be fewer than fifteen: but we owed the attention to the fact that we were departing, and every one who could possibly pretend to have rendered us a service hoped to receive a present.

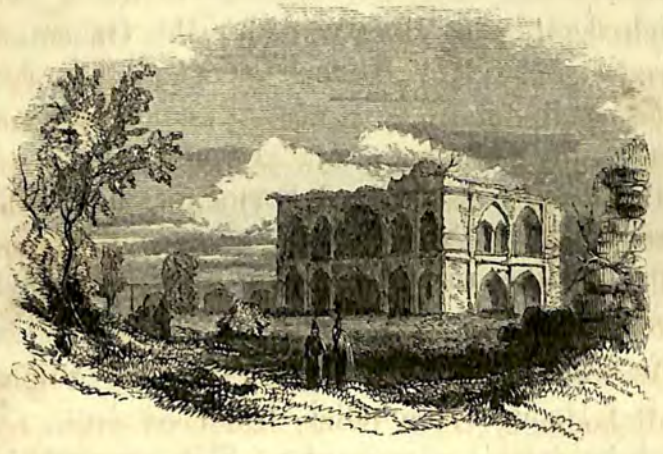
I observed that the town does not now fill up the space it formerly occupied, a great deal of ground within the walls being covered with ruins. Passing through the gateway, we proceeded along a road built by Shah Abbas, in the same manner as the causeway, lying north and south, in a direct line to Ferrabad. It had lately been paved for a short distance from the gate, and was in good condition. For about eight miles we continued along this road, alternately through rice-fields and forest; but the surrounding country was well-populated, and numerous wreaths of smoke curling above the trees denoted the situation of different villages. The path now became broken up, and was lost in the jungle; so, turning aside, we continued our march through the fields. At about half-past one we came to the village of Auhun, and, further on, to Aumil; both which, with several others in the vicinity, are inhabited by the Jambegloo and Modaunloo Koords. Near the last-mentioned place

was a large grassy mound, the first I had seen of those "tuppehs," as they are called, which frequently occur in Mauzunderoon, Astrabad, and the Toorcoman desert, and which I shall have occasion to allude to hereafter. The one in question looked very much like some of the circular hill-forts in Ireland. At about two miles from Ferrabad we came upon a fine open plain of smooth turf; at the extremity of which, in the direction of the sea, the ruins of a fine mosque and caravanserai, broken-down walls and arches, extending many hundred yards, indicated our Menzil. On entering Ferrabad, now a collection of some seventy or eighty miserable huts, we passed under the remains of a vaulted bazar: a few stones and one arch, on the north bank of the Thedjin, show where once stood a bridge; and foundations of numerous buildings are seen all along the edge of the water.

As we had sent on a man the day before, a small house of three rooms had been made ready for us, which is sometimes occupied by the Prince, when he comes here to hunt and shoot. It was full of holes and crevices, but we nevertheless endeavoured to persuade ourselves that it was very comfortable; which was so much the easier, as we knew that no house in the village was to be compared to it.

Close to our quarters were the ruins of the Jehan-numeh, (wonder of the world,) a pleasure-house built by Shah Abbas. It is situated near the river, and is surrounded on all sides by high mud

walls, having been most probably the anderoon. It has an upper and lower story, divided into a great many chambers, the largest of which is on the upper floor: most of them are very small. All the ceilings are vaulted; and the doors and windows, opening on every side, must have made the place a very cool and agreeable summer residence. The walls and roofs have been very beautifully painted, and the figures of women dancing and playing musical instruments can be



distinguished, but nearly all the colours have been rubbed off or obliterated by soot and smoke. Some of the roofs are curiously worked into a small fretwork of niches of the most fanciful shapes, which have originally been fitted with bits of looking-glass, but only two or three pieces now remain, and the plaster is broken and destroyed. The interior decorations of Persian houses seem to have undergone no change since the time of Abbas; and many rooms that I have seen, in Teh-

raun and other towns, are embellished in precisely the same style. In one of the apartments on the ground-floor the flowers and scrolls painted on the roof, which had lost their colour and were stained with smoke, had exactly the appearance of Japan-work. On the flat top of the building are the remains of a square brick tower, overgrown by luxuriant creeping plants, which, though they heighten the picturesque beauty of a building, materially hasten its decay. In the court-yard, in front of the principal entrance, stood a little mud hovel, contrasting strangely with the forlorn and decayed glory of the palace; they were true emblems of the state of Persia,—past greatness, and present misery and poverty. I took a hasty sketch of the place and returned home, for the sun had already set, and the air began to feel chilly. There are many other ruins at Ferrabad, a caravanserai, a mosque, baths, &c., but we had no time to see them.

Ferrabad is one of three villages held in tweel by one Hadgee Nooroollah Khan Affghaun, from which he derives a revenue of 800 tomauns. He is a pensioner of the Persian Government, and is paid in this manner.

The trade is very insignificant. The Toorcomans bring annually between four and five hundred khalwars of naphtha, which is worth here about eight shillings the khalwar of thirty-six mauns Tabreez, or two hundred and thirty pounds English. The naphtha is of inferior quality and different colour to that from Badcobeh, none of which is brought here direct. The Toorcomans, also, bring salt and

"nardoneh," or the seeds of the pomegranate, which are much used in Persian cookery. A ship occasionally arrives from Astrachan with Russian goods of the same description as those brought to Meshed-i-sir, and the few exports from Ferrabad are the same as from that port.

The inhabitants are very poor, and their houses of the meanest kind. There was neither corn, barley, rice, nor even straw for our horses, and we had to send for it from a neighbouring village. A little silk is produced here, and several of the cottages are surrounded with mulberry plantations.

The morning was clear and frosty, and before breakfast we took a walk of about a mile and a half to the mouth of the river, to visit the Armenian Stepan, and learn something regarding the sturgeon fishery which he carries on. The river was now shallow, but never at any time can vessels enter it. Two ships lay at anchor a mile in the offing; they remain there during the winter, and in the spring sail for Astrachan with the produce of the fishery. Enzellee is the only place along the south coast of the Caspian where ships can get into harbour, everywhere else they lie in the roadsteads.

On the western bank of the river is erected a warehouse, and several small houses inhabited by the Russian fishermen, by some of whom we were conducted to the residence of their employer, Stepan. He was a fine-looking man, and received us very cordially, gave us tea, and seemed rather surprised that we declined taking half a tumbler

of rum at eight o'clock in the morning. He told us that he rented the sturgeon fisheries of seven rivers along the coast, from a small stream the other side the Bawbil, to the Koulbad, dividing Mauzunderoon from Astrabad, in fact all the fisheries of the province, for 350 tomauns. He has held them for twenty-five years, and his lease will expire in five more.

The whole produce of these rivers amounts, in a good year, to about

Fish . . .	24,000.
Caviare, poots . .	2,500 to 3,000.
Isinglass . . .	40 to 50.

The Thedjin is the principal fishery in Mauzunderoon, and produces some 12,000 fish annually. Stepan employs altogether about an hundred and twenty men, most of whom accompany him to Astrachan every summer, and return for the fishing in the winter.

The fishery of the carp, sefeed-mahee, and azad-mahee in the Thedjin is rented by a Mussulman for an hundred tomauns per annum. The man said that the produce varied exceedingly; some years he took as many as a thousand of the latter fish (the large trout before described), while in others, not more than ten; and complained that the last two years had been so unusually dry, and the water in the river so low, that he had caught little or nothing. The price of all these fish of course varies, as they are abundant or otherwise; at present, a good-sized azad-mahee, and a small sefeed-mahee were sold together for about a shilling.

At twelve o'clock we forded the river near the remains of the bridge, and commenced our march to Karatuppeh. The path lay for many miles along the sea-shore, which presented the usual scenery. The water was very shallow, and large flocks of gulls and wild fowl were sporting on its surface. We forded successively the Killer-al-naggee-beg, the Zerdee, and the Koulbarood. I had observed that all the rivers on the coast, from the Sefeed Rood, have a long sandbank at their mouths, projecting from their western banks, and stretching east, to which point they make a turn, flowing almost parallel to the shore before entering the sea; this occurs even when the rivers approach the coast in a north or north-west direction. From this fact it was apparent, that the prevailing winds were from the westward and north-west, as the waves running one way and the streams another, gradually raised banks between them. I was informed that this conjecture regarding the winds was correct.

We left the sea-side at a place where stood the remains of an old tower, formerly erected for a watchman, to warn the people of the approach of the Toorcomans, who, until very lately, used to make frequent incursions into this part of the country from the sea, coming over from their own coast in boats. The road now lay through a wide swampy plain, employed in rice cultivation, in the midst of which the village of Noserabad is situated. I saw quantities of snipe, ducks and geese, curlew pipers, and a variety of other aquatic birds. We continued for three or four miles through this kind of country, follow-

ing each other in single file along the narrow ridges which formed the pathway, till we emerged on a magnificent plain of smooth, dry turf, occasionally interspersed with bushes of the wild pomegranate and beds of rushes, but exhibiting no signs of cultivation. It extended to the sea on the north; to the east, the waters of the bay of Astrabad were just visible; and on the side of the mountains it was skirted by the forest, concealing numerous villages, the existence of which, as usual, was only to be discovered by the smoke of their fires. On entering this plain we put up a flock of small bustards, the first I had seen in Persia, and also numbers of golden plover. In one place we descried a jackal, and gave chace; it was a capital run, as the beast had a long start. One of the greyhounds seized hold of him, but he showed fight, and the dog letting him go, he finally escaped among the bushes.

Riding onwards for several miles, we came in sight of Karatuppeh, which, as its name implies, is built on a dark-coloured mound, rising abruptly from the plain. Not far distant is another similar hillock, but not surrounded by habitations. The natives can give no satisfactory information with regard to these mounds. It is very evident that they are not natural elevations; and it is probable they may be the burial-places of the ancient Kings of Hyrcania. Herodotus details at full length the mode of sepulture of the ancient Kings of Scythia, when, after various sacrifices,—the slaughter of their wives and chief attendants,—all the bodies were piled together, with numerous utensils of gold and silver, and

covered with a lofty mound of earth. The same custom may have prevailed here. I was afterwards told that one of them, called Turenje Tuppeh, a short distance from Astrabad, had been opened by Mahomed Nessr Khan, the late governor of the province, who found various rings, plates, knives, and cups of gold and copper, and also some men's bones of large size. My informant had seen these, and had a ring in his possession, which he promised to show me, but it was forgotten. Most of these curiosities were sent to the Shah, and the rest kept by the finder. There are many tuppehs in Azerbijan, similar in shape, which, when opened, have been found to contain nothing but ashes. These are by some supposed to be the remains of villages of the ancient Guebres or fire-worshippers. A Guebre village was built of mud-houses, ranged in a circle round the sides of a high mound, on the summit of which stood a temple. In process of time both houses and temple having crumbled to their original dust, nothing was left but a mound of earth. Near Ispahaun are the ruins of a Guebre village, in a sufficient state of preservation to show that they were constructed in the manner just described. A friend of mine, who has resided a long time in Persia, told me that in many villages there exists a custom of throwing all the ashes and rubbish in one particular spot. They gradually accumulate to a vast heap, which assumes a conical form, as the fresh ashes are always carried to the top; and on the desertion and decay of the village it becomes covered with a coating of earth and grass. This way of accounting for these tuppehs

seems to be particularly applicable to those which have been found to consist of ashes.

We arrived at Karatuppeh shortly after sunset, and were met by a son of Mohamed Kerrim Khan, heading an istakball. The whole village had assembled at the top of the hillock to witness our arrival, and we were conducted, amid expressions of welcome, to a small house, which had been cleared for us. While carpets were being spread, we ascended the hill, which commands a magnificent view of the surrounding country. The shore of the bay was about three miles distant, and the tongue of sand called Meeaum Kaleh (middle castle), forming a breakwater to the bay, could be seen stretching eastward along the horizon, till lost in the distance. This strip is similar to that which encloses the lake of Enzellee, but on a larger scale, being some thirty-six miles long, and varying in breadth from one to three miles: it is uninhabited and partly covered with trees, the tops of which were visible long after the low shore had disappeared. The plain was dotted with numerous herds of cattle returning home for the night, and here and there stood one of the watch-towers before mentioned. Demawend, hardly visible, bore S.W. by W., and towards the south, Soofeeabad, the pleasure-house of Shah Abbas, near Ashreff, might be distinguished like a white spot on the dark mountains. The village of Karatuppeh is built all round the sides of the hillock, precisely in the manner of an old Guebre village, and has a very curious appearance. There are altogether two hundred houses, inhabited in about an equal proportion

by Affghauns and the native peasantry. The former are of the Gellijai tribe, and were originally brought from Candahar by Nadir Shah, to the number of twelve thousand families, and placed in this part of Mauzunderoon. Repeated broils and feuds with the natives reduced their numbers, and the remainder fled to Khiva. Some time afterwards, three hundred families returned to Gogdun, whence they were brought by Aga Mohamed Khan, and established here at Saree and at Nodehhak, another small village, a short distance from this, inhabited by about thirty families of Affghauns. The whole of this tribe in Mauzunderoon furnish a quota of two hundred horse to the crown, in lieu of taxes. The ryots pay the same as the other peasantry of the country. They cultivate rice, barley, and wheat, and their fields are neatly kept and enclosed with good hedges. Bread is commonly used, but the wheat crop having this year partially failed, it was very scarce. The people complain that this place is unhealthy in summer, and that the stream with which Karatuppeh is supplied with water, being at that season small, it becomes strongly impregnated with the salt of the soil. In winter and in spring the current is quicker, and being also more abundant, the unpleasant taste of the mineral is hardly perceptible. Mohamed Kerrim Khan has a house both here and at Nodehhak, and one of his sons resides at each place, to manage matters in his absence.

Fraser mentions this place as having formerly possessed warehouses and caravanserais erected by Shah Abbas, and as having been the shipping

place of Ashreff. This, however, must be a mistake, as Karatuppeh is three miles from the seashore. The ruins alluded to are situated on the banks of the bay, at a place called Shah-keelaw, about four miles to the N.E. of Karatuppeh.

To our great joy, our baggage, which we had been anxiously expecting, came in an hour or two after dark. The poor beasts had hardly been able to crawl the distance of five fursucks, having been fed last night at Ferrabad on a short allowance of rice straw.

CHAPTER XIII.

Leavè Karatuppeh.—Soofeeabad.—Reach Ashreff.—Description of the various Gardens and Palaces. — Ashreff. — Departure. — Arrival at Reckhiaubeen.—Our Lodgings.—Road to Gez.—Curious Grave-Stones.—The Jair-i-Koulbad.—Arrive at Gez. —Manner of building Houses.—Disappointed in our attempts to visit Arshourada.—At last succeed in obtaining a Boat.—Passage across the Bay.—Reach the Russian Vessels.—Mr. Duhamel.—The Steamer.—The Araxe, fourteen-gun Brig.—Arshourada. — Unhealthy Climate. — Sickness and Mortality among the Sailors.—Habitations on the Island.—Grave-Yard. —Regarding the Presence of the Russians at Arshourada. — The Mode of Life of the Officers.—Their Pay.—Return to Gez in the Steamer.—Astonishment of our Persian Servants.—The Bay of Astrabad.—The Landing.—Preparations for Departure.

We left Karatuppeh about nine o'clock, and were accompanied by the Khan's son a considerable distance across the plain, in the direction of Ashreff. The ground was more swampy than that we had traversed yesterday, and was covered with flocks of geese, ducks, and little bustards. We were told that the last-named birds were found here in great numbers during the winter, but that they disappeared in the summer. On approaching nearer the mountains, we entered a more cultivated district, and the road lay through wheat and barley fields, interspersed with cottages and

clumps of trees. Passing through the small village of Zeerewaun, belonging to the Shah's mirahor, (master of horse,) Mohamed Khan, we came once more upon the old causeway, and, crossing it, went round the foot of an almost precipitous hill, on which Soofeeabad is built; we ascended it by a narrow winding path, and halfway up, where the ascent becomes less steep, are the remains of an arched gate, and a strong wall extending about two hundred yards along the side of the hill. We continued winding to the summit, when, passing two more gateways, the one in a dilapidated tower, and the other in a wall about fifteen feet high, we came to the square terrace on which the house is built. This terrace is seventy-five yards by fifty-five, and is supported on the north, west, and east sides by a wall formed by arches, the south side being level with the top of the hill. The pleasure-house stands in the centre, and is seventy-five feet by fifty-one, and about eighty high. For five or six feet from the ground, all round the exterior, is a coating of stone; the remainder of the structure is of brick. I could see no trace of any lacquered tile-work on the walls or in any part of the building, but among the rubbish round about I picked up several pieces. There is a ground floor and upper story. The principal hall below is in the form of a cross, and four small chambers at each corner of the building form a square. The floor is tiled, and in the centre is a stone fountain, now dry. The superfluous water formerly flowed into tanks outside, through channels termi-

nating in slopes composed of flat stones with scale-like incisions, which occasioned a slight rippling. The roof is vaulted, and the whole of the interior is plastered with white stucco. The upper story is divided into several small chambers, now choked up with the rubbish and tiles of the roof, which has fallen in. The terrace is planted with tall cypress and orange trees, and commands a magnificent view. On the south side, the well-wooded mountains rise, range after range, till they terminate in a lofty ridge covered with snow: to the west and north is a wide extent of plain, laid out in fields and dotted with many villages; the landscape was tinted in a most beautiful manner by the different lights and shades of passing clouds, and terminated, towards the north, by the blue waters of the bay of Astrabad, while, to the east, we looked down on the town of Ashreff and the ruins of its famous gardens and palaces, about a mile distant, the mountains in the direction of Astrabad forming the back-ground of the picture. Having spent about an hour and a half in this delightful place, which was used by Shah Abbas as a pleasure-house for his anderoon, we descended the hill, and, in less than a quarter of an hour, arrived at Ashreff. We tied up our horses in one of the gardens, and proceeded at once to inspect the various remains.

The grand entrance of the principal garden, the Baugh-i-Shah, (the king's garden,) mentioned by Hanway as being decorated with a picture of the lion and sun, is now no more, and the place is

entered from the bazar of the town, through what must have been an inner gateway, which now exhibits no remains of splendour. In a direct line through the centre of this garden is the stone channel, also described by the above-named author, with its four cascades and the holes cut along the edge for the reception of candles, all which still remain as perfect as the first day they were made. The channel is now dry, and proceeds from a stone reservoir, thirty-nine by forty-four yards, behind which was formerly the "sumptuous aiwan," or the "chehil sittoon," (forty pillars,) as it was called. This was burnt down during the reign of Nadir Shah, who commanded that something should be built to replace it, and a mean wooden building, open in the centre, with upper and lower chambers on each side, was erected; a poor substitute, however, for the former fine structure. Behind this, again, are three more cascades, over which the water was conducted, from the hills behind, through the chehil sittoon, into the reservoir, and thence along the channel leading to the entrance of the garden. All the cascades are over scaled stones, similar to those before alluded to. There are quantities of orange trees, several fine cypresses, and an old pine or two, but most of them must have been planted since the time of Hanway.

On the west side of this garden are situated four separate but adjacent inclosures lying north and south.

The most northerly is the Baugh-i-shemaul (garden of the north), which now contains nothing but

orange-trees and some heaps of rubbish. Next comes the anderoon, which is in such a state of ruin that the plan of the original building cannot be traced. A large square court, surrounded by arched recesses, with a few broken down masses of masonry in the centre, are all the present remains. Some of the recesses are inhabited by several families of poor people, who have built up the open fronts with mud walls. A ruined gateway from the anderoon leads to the garden of the Sahib Zemaun, through which runs a similar canal to that in the Baugh-i-shah, with several cascades terminating in a tank, now quite dry and choked with rubbish. Round this reservoir just in front of the gateway are several stone posts which supported seats, where Fraser supposes that European ambassadors sat while entertained by the Shah sitting in the small chamber above the gateway. At the southern extremity of this garden are the remains of the palace dedicated to the twelfth Imaum, after whom the place is named. The lower compartment of this building is divided into several chambers, now mostly filled with rubbish; but the roof of the principal hall, though blackened by smoke from the fires of dervishes and other vagabonds, still exhibits traces of the beautiful manner in which it was formerly adorned. The upper story is all in ruins, the roof having fallen in, and in most places the walls only are standing. In some of the small corner chambers, however, were plainly visible the remains of those indelicate pictures which so offended old Hanway's good taste. Fraser must have overlooked them, as he says that they had

vanished from the walls, and, indeed, it would be very possible to do so, as the rooms are small, and their entrances blocked up with the wreck of the roof; it was by mere accident that I entered them. Beyond this palace, further south, was situated the Khelwut, or private garden, close to the foot of the hills, but nothing now remains save a few heaps of stones. On the east side of the Baugh-i-shah is the Baugh-i-tuppeh (garden of the mound), which is a raised garden, and entered by an ascent up a flight of steps. It is square, and surrounded by a wall, fortified at each corner by a round tower. One of these is lofty, and terminates in a circular tiled roof; the others have been broken down level with the wall, or within a few feet of it. The garden is planted, as all the others, with oranges and cypress. In the centre are the ruins of a small pleasure-house; and on the side nearest the Baugh-i-shah, and separating it from this garden, is a range of apartments, baths and sitting-rooms, in tolerable repair. A gate at the south-east corner leads down a flight of steps to the garden of the Amauret-i-cheshmeh (palace of the fountain), which lies at the foot of the hills in that direction. It is approached by a long avenue, originally planted on either side with cypress-trees, which have now all disappeared, save one fine old tree; along the centre is a stone channel and cascades similar to those in the other gardens. The palace is in ruins, though some of the interior decorations are peculiarly fresh and brilliant. It is erected over a copious spring of delightfully clear water, from which the garden was

formerly supplied; the artificial channels, however, are now deserted, and the water flows along a deep ditch overgrown with brambles.

The whole of these establishments, which occupy a considerable extent of ground, are enclosed within a strong stone wall. Altogether we experienced much pleasure in examining these memorials of departed greatness; the place as a summer residence must have been delightful in the extreme, and the whole is well worthy of the monarch by whom it was built, particularly when it is remembered that this palace was only a country-house, and not a court establishment.

Ashreff has now dwindled to a mere village of meanly-built houses; those which belonged to the officers and attendants of Shah Abbas, having been probably built of mud and plaster, must have crumbled to dust as soon as deserted by their inmates.

Having lingered in these gardens as long as time would permit, we proceeded as far as the village of Reckhiaubeen, where we had determined to pass the night, wishing to reach Gez the next evening. The road from Ashreff lay through the forest along the causeway, which is here very dilapidated and painful to the horses, being formed of large stones procured from the rocks in the neighbourhood. The distance from Karatuppeh to Reckhiaubeen is three fursucks, Ashreff lying exactly half way.

Reckhiaubeen belongs to Humza Khan, Governor of Anazon, the first district of Astrabad; it contains about an hundred and thirty houses. The Khan was at Astrabad, and his sons, of whom there are

five, were also absent. One of his servants, however, was very civil, and procured us a tolerable lodging; it is true, the doors would not shut, and the windows were mere holes in the walls, not affording a very brilliant prospect of comfort during a cold raw night, but with the help of curtains and a good fire we succeeded in making ourselves sufficiently snug.

Jan. 14. We left Reckhiaubeen at about nine o'clock. The mountains, here thinly wooded, lay close on our right, and at first the road was along the causeway, occasionally turning aside among the ploughed fields to avoid some peculiarly dilapidated spot where the mud might have swallowed up a camel.

Shortly after setting out we passed the villages of Kellaugh and Kalapoin, hid among the trees on our left, and then for about two miles proceeded through a low thick jungle of fern and brambles. Further on we passed Tilletash, Tillenoh, Imraun, and Hermindzemeen, all small villages situated close to one another at the foot of the hills on the right. Several burying-grounds lay by the road-side, which were filled with curious looking grave-stones, painted with different colours—red, green, and blue. Some of them had inscriptions, and others merely fanciful devices; they were not more than a foot and a-half high, and a few of them were covered with small sheds formed of four sticks, supporting a straw or wooden roof to preserve them from the rain.

Having crossed several beds of mountain torrents

we came to that of the river Koulbad, about fifty yards broad, and now quite dry, but from the appearance of the banks and the large stones lying in the channel, I should think it very difficult to ford in the spring.

The village of Koulbad lay further north towards the sea. A mile further on we came to the Jair-i-Koulbad (ditch of Koulbad), which forms the boundary between the provinces of Astrabad and Mauzunderoon. It is a dry ditch about ten yards wide and five deep, and was formerly constructed as a protection against the Toorcomans. It extended from the mountains to the sea, but it is in many places almost obliterated, the banks having fallen in and become overgrown with vegetation. The causeway crosses the ditch at the place where we passed it, and the road was formerly defended by a tower and gateway, of which now only a few stones remain. The Jair-i-Koulbad is four and a-half fursucks (eighteen miles) from Ashreff, and two fursucks from Gez.

We continued our march through the forest, which now and then opened upon a delightful scene of lawns, cottages, and cultivation, terminated by the sparkling waters of the bay of Astrabad. A mile or two after crossing the dry bed of a river called the Chiparkendee, we arrived at Gez, a large straggling village, distant five fursucks (twenty miles) from Reckhiaubeen.

In this province during the autumn and winter months there is a comparative scarcity of water, as nearly all the streams become completely dry, and

for the first time since quitting Upper Persia we found people making a cannaut, or subterraneous aqueduct, not far from the Chiparkendee.

The lodgings assigned to us at Gez were wretched, which was the more unpleasant as we intended to remain there for a day or two; however, there was no help for it, all the other houses being as bad, if not worse. They are built here in the following manner:—a flooring of boards and branches, covered with a thick coat of mud, is placed on six or eight blocks of wood, which raise it, in the manner of an English corn stack, about two feet from the ground. Round three sides walls are formed of upright stakes bound together, and principally supported by four strong posts planted in the ground at each corner of the building. The interstices are filled up with mud. Over the whole is a pointed thatched roof, not fitting very close to the top of the walls, but leaving holes and crevices all round between the thatch and the ends of the stakes, which are of unequal lengths. There is, therefore, free entrance to the wind, and also, in a measure, egress for the smoke, though this purpose is hardly answered, as when a fire is lighted within the room fills with smoke much quicker than it escapes. We have now the shell of the house, a raised floor, three walls, and a roof, and all that is wanting to complete it is an inner wall, parallel to the open side, dividing the building into two apartments—one with an open front, called the beeroon, or outside, where the family generally sit during the day; and the other the anderoon, or inside, which is entered by

a small door in the partition wall, and serves as a sleeping-room. There are no windows to this chamber, and except the little light which enters through the chinks at the top of the walls it is perfectly dark. In one of these inner apartments we took up our abode, giving the "beroon" to our servants, who were much better off than ourselves, as they were not incommoded by smoke, and had a roaring fire while we were shivering inside, with every possible draught through the room, without being able to light a fire for fear of suffocation.

Jan. 15. Last night we had intimated our intention of visiting the Russian commander in the Bay of Astrabad, who is called by the natives the Derrieh Beggee, or Admiral, and is stationed off the Island of Arshourada, and we requested the chief of the village to procure us boats early the next morning for this purpose. This he promised with a great many "be cheshms" (upon my eyes), but at the time appointed we found that he had not done anything towards performing his promise.

Breakfast being finished we rode to the shore, about two miles distant from the village. The bay was as smooth as a pond; to the east lay the low Toorcoman coast, from which arose several large columns of smoke, occasioned by the burning of reeds; and to the north, the masts of the Russian ships at Arshourada were just discernible on the horizon. Two merchant vessels were lying at anchor about a mile from the shore, and another was crossing the bay in full sail towards the eastern coast. After many useless attempts to attract the

notice of the people on board the nearest vessel, we sent off a man in a small canoe, which happened to be on the beach, who, after speaking her, returned with the answer that all her boats were absent; so that having waited nearly two hours, we were obliged to go back again with the prospect of an extra day's detention in our miserable lodgings. Suleiman Khan, a son of Humza Khan, had accompanied us to the beach, and promised that we should not be disappointed again, and that a boat should be ready early next morning. During the remainder of the day I went out shooting, but only found a few woodcocks, and the cover was so dense that I could not fire.

In the evening we received a visit, on the part of the Derrieh Beggee, from a Meerza Ibrahim, an Armenian in the Russian service. He said that Mr. Duhamel would be delighted to see us, and offered to accompany us to the ships on the morrow.

Jan. 16. This morning, for the first time since the commencement of the month, the rain fell in torrents, and there was a heavy gale of wind, consequently no boats were ready. About twelve o'clock, however, the weather cleared up, and a messenger sent to the beach returned, saying, that by the time we got there a boat would be in readiness, at a certain place, about half a mile west of where we had been yesterday, and we repaired thither with all speed. On arriving there, however, no boat was to be seen, except one alongside the vessel we had hailed the previous day, and we had therefore to go to the old spot, through a deep and fatiguing

morass. Here we lighted a fire, the smoke of which was discovered from the ship, and at last we had the satisfaction of seeing the boat make for the land. It could not approach, however, within three hundred yards of the beach, there not being more than a foot of water, and we only got on board by means of the canoe, after being carried even to this some fifty yards on the shoulders of the Russian sailors.

Ourselves and servants being embarked, we made for the ship, on reaching which the sailors took on board a light, a compass, and what appeared to us bread and water, sufficient for a two days' cruise; then crossing themselves, and muttering a short prayer for the prosperity of the voyage, started for Arshourada. A fair wind, happily, sprung up, and having set sail, the men lighted their pipes, and, at our request, sang some Russian songs in chorus, which would have been pretty had the voices been equal to the spirit of the singers; the air was very cold, and the wind freshening, brought us alongside the Russian steamer about an hour after dark. We were received on deck by an officer, who conducted us to a comfortable little cabin, where we found Mr. Duhamel. He is a gentlemanly man, greeted us cordially, and gave us a good supper; after which he showed us to a cabin astern, where comfortable beds had been made ready for us, and we retired for the night.

The first object that attracted our attention in the morning was the steamer in which we were. It was a very neat little craft, of forty-horse power,

clean and well ordered. It was called the "Kama," drew five feet water, was used chiefly for carrying despatches, was commanded by a lieutenant, with two midshipmen, and a crew of sixteen seamen, and was armed with four small signal guns.

She arrived at Arshourada late in the autumn, for the purpose of trying coals from the mines at Shahkoo, a district among the mountains, which I shall have occasion to allude to hereafter. They were found very stony, though I believe that such is nearly always the case with the upper stratum of this mineral, and the natives have as yet only taken it from near the surface. Experiments were also made with naphtha, but they did not succeed; and wood is now usually burnt. The "Kama" was the only steamer then on the Caspian; but there was another boat built of iron, of forty-five horse power, on the stocks at Astrachan, which was expected to be launched in the spring, as soon as that port was free from ice.

Shortly after we were up, Mr. Duhamel made his appearance, and having ordered his gig, took us on board the "Araxe," a fourteen-gun brig (12-pounders). Everything looked clean and in good order, though we found out that much was got up for the occasion. We were introduced to her captain, a young man about twenty years of age, but as he could speak no other language than Russian, of which we knew nothing, it was a most silent visit. The "Araxe" will remain on this station about a year, when some other vessel will be appointed to replace her. The Russian naval force in the Caspian

consists of the above-mentioned steam-vessel, and seven or eight brigs, the largest of which carry eighteen guns.

The only other vessel here was a transport brig, of about an hundred tons burden, laden with provisions and stores. Leaving the "Araxe," we went to visit the island of Arshourada, a few hundred yards from which the ships lay at anchor. It is a circular patch of sand, between three and four miles from the point of Meeaunkaleh, and will, in all probability, soon become joined to it, as the greatest depth of water between them does not exceed four feet, and becomes more shallow every year. The circumference of the island varies with the season; in winter, however, it is not more than two miles; and in summer, when the waters in the bay increase, rather less. The climate is exceedingly unhealthy; and the men had suffered severely from a malignant fever, which sometimes took them off in a few hours. There were altogether an hundred and thirty men, and at this time thirty-five were ill, many without hopes of recovery; while forty or fifty more were in a weak but convalescent state. Ten men had died since their arrival five months ago: one man, who was perfectly well yesterday, was seized and died this morning; and Mr. Duhamel had only just recovered from a sickness, which had confined him to his bed for two months. At one time, he said, nearly every man he had was ill; and they had some fears that the Toorcomans might find it out, and seize the opportunity to massacre the whole of them, and burn the ships. There is no vegetation on the island

save a few rushes; and no fresh water, except what is found immediately below the surface of the sand, and is brackish and unwholesome. The only habitations are two large sail-cloth tents, occupied by the sick, whose ghastly appearance was painful to behold. They were much exposed in these tents, and a building of wood and reeds was in the course of construction as an hospital; besides these there was a bakehouse, a piggery, and poultry-yard, and a small Toorcoman tent, for the use of Mr. Duhamel. Near the landing-place were two piles of coal, one Russian and one English, covered with sail-cloth; and close by was a small sloop, hauled up high and dry. A pile of long poles for building stood near the new hospital; and I observed two guns, 6 and 9-pounders, one on a field-carriage, and the other dismounted; and also seven small swivels, like the signal guns of the steamer, fastened in a row on a single log of wood, and forming a kind of portable battery. At the western side of the island, a number of wooden posts, with cross-bars at the top, marked the burying-ground.

It would appear by the account of the Russians here, that they have been rather ill-treated by the Persians, without cause. Some three years ago, the whole coast as far as Meshid-i-sir, was kept in a state of constant fear of an incursion of the Toorcomans: not a night passed without some kind of depredation being committed; and very frequently a large party would cross the bay in their boats, and plunder a village, carrying off the inhabitants into slavery. The Persians not possessing

boats, had no check on their ferocious neighbours; sometimes, indeed, the Governor of Astrabad retaliated, by foraying in the desert; but the peasants, who had, perhaps, suffered at the other end of the province, were not benefited by it, as restitution was never made to them. Such was the state of things, when, as the Russians say, they were invited by the Shah to protect the coast, as the Persians were incapable of doing so, and therefore took up a position off Arshourada. Since they have been here, hardly a case of pilfering has occurred from the sea, and not a single attack on a large scale. All boats from the Toorcoman shore are obliged to come alongside Mr. Duhamel's vessel, and show a pass from the heads of the district or tribe to which they belong, or are otherwise sent back. On exhibiting this pass, they receive another from the commodore; their arms are taken from them, and they are then allowed to proceed with whatever merchandise they have on board, and on returning, they must again give in their passes; their boats are searched for slaves, and their arms restored to them. Any Toorcoman boat found on the Persian coast without a pass from the Russian commodore, is liable to be seized by the authorities. The inhabitants along the coast are now in a state of security, the numerous watch-towers, and the fortifications of their villages, are neglected as useless; but, though they confess the benefit they have received from the Russians, and own that their conduct has been most exemplary, always paying for what they want, and never interfering with the natives, yet they exhibit

the strongest aversion and jealousy towards them. I have already alluded to the extreme shallowness of the water near the shores of the bay; and M. Duhamel, finding that the constant wading through the surf, whenever anything was required from the shore, materially affected the health of the seamen, and in some instances occasioned the fever which had proved so fatal, commenced building a small jetty, that they might land dry. On perceiving this, the people rose up in arms; the work was destroyed, and letters were written to Tehraun, saying, that the Derrieh Beggee was constructing a bridge from the shore to the island—a distance of about twelve miles! About the same time there were other reports which were believed, and created a considerable sensation at Tehraun; one, that the Russians were erecting a stone fortress at Arshourada. Had the slightest reflection been used, the absurdity of these rumours would have been self-evident. With regard to the fort, where were the materials to come from? and what would be its use to the Russians, commanding nothing but the entrance of a bay, in a sea where there are no ships but their own? Besides all this, many other instances have occurred, showing the most unfriendly and jealous spirit towards them; and it is astonishing that they should remain in such a wretched place, where so little is to be gained, and where in return for what they have done, they meet with nothing but annoyance. They have no trade of their own to protect, though their endeavours to establish one may account for the length of time they have already remained here. I

heard it mentioned as a probability, that the station would soon be abandoned.

The life of the officers here must be most miserable. I really pitied them; they were silent and gloomy, each separately taking his melancholy walk up and down the decks, his head hanging on his breast, and his hands thrust deep into his pockets. They appear not to have any indulgences or resources, nor to be sociably inclined, unless when at the card-table, at which they amuse themselves almost day and night, playing at farthing-point whist, and, probably, cursing the hard fate which confines them to so dreary a spot, with a certainty of sickness and the probability of death. We were informed that the pay of the lieutenant commanding the steamer was 200 ducats, about 100*l.*, that of a midshipman was 50*l.* The doctor had 70*l.*, and the common sailors about twelve shillings a-year. The latter live chiefly on black bread and soup, and the fare of the junior officers is much the same.

Mr. Duhamel had very politely offered to take us back to Gez in the steamer, first making a short run round the bay, and, on returning from the island, as the steam was up, we weighed anchor and departed. The amazement of our Persian servants knew no bounds; they had never before seen anything of the kind, "never, even in a dream," and they were quite at a loss to conceive how the boat went a-head,—what moved it? and, of course, notwithstanding all our explanations, it still remained a profound mystery. Who ever heard

of ships being driven along by hot water? First they would dive down into the engine-room, and then they would rush upon deck and stare at the paddles for a quarter of an hour. However, they could make nothing of it, looking at each other in blank amazement, and exclaiming, "Wonderful! wonderful! Hot water! Allah! there is but one God!"

When I came on deck, after breakfast, the low sandy bank of Meeaunkaleh lay about a mile and a half on our right, and though, as before stated, the boat did not draw more than five feet water, we could not approach nearer, and two men were employed sounding, lest we should run aground. Mr. Duhamel told me that the greatest depth of water in the bay is three fathoms, and the bottom is generally of soft and tenacious clay, so that if an anchor be left out a couple of days together it is got up with the greatest difficulty. The Caspian is in general shallow, but off Derbend soundings have not been found at two hundred fathoms.

During our run, the wind rose, and before we arrived opposite the landing-place it had increased to a perfect gale. Our baggage and servants were first sent on shore, and we followed. The sea was running high, and the boat soon became half-filled with water. We could not approach within three hundred yards of the beach, and, having thrown out a grappling iron, lay tossing about for at least ten minutes, the sea constantly breaking over us, until a flat-bottomed boat was sent out, which

took us about two hundred yards nearer, and the remainder of the disembarkation was effected on the backs of the sailors.

We found our horses waiting for us on the beach; they were shivering with cold, and we hastened back to Gez, much pleased with our visit, and wishing our kind friends might soon be removed to a healthier and more pleasant station.

Meerza Ibrahim dined with us in the evening, and, having packed up most of our baggage, we retired to rest, with no small feeling of satisfaction at the prospect of quitting our present uncomfortable quarters.

CHAPTER XIV.

Departure from Gez.—Kafshigeeree.—Toorcoman Incursions.—Ink.—Sesame.—Leave Kafshigeeree.—Thievish Propensities of the Natives.—Our Gholaum.—Arrival at Astrabad.—Suleiman Khan.—Anecdote.—Manner in which the Khan obtained his Post.—A Gholaum wounded by a Toorcoman.—Humza Khan.—Sale of an Uncle.—Dinner.—Scenery.—An Occasion of Serious Discomposure to Suleiman Khan.—A Visit to the Desert.—The Party.—Suleiman Khan's Son.—Met by some Toorcoman Chiefs.—A singular Shooting Party.—Head-dress of the Toorcoman Women.—The Encampment.—The Chief's Wife.—A Singer.—Breakfast.—Return to Astrabad.

January 18th. We left Gez at about nine o'clock, and, in spite of the stormy appearance of the previous evening, had a lovely day for our ride.

After travelling about a mile and a half, we came to the dry bed of a river called the Sir-i-mahaleh, and shortly afterwards crossed a deep narrow channel, also dry, over a small dilapidated bridge, called the Poole-i-Hadjee Ibrahim. About four miles from Gez, the road lay between two low mounds, which, our guide told us, were part of an ancient city called Berber, formerly very large and splendid, though a few mounds and stones are now all that remain. He said that

there was a tradition that Allee cleft the overhanging mountains with his sword, and a flood issued forth which destroyed the city, but he observed, in conclusion, that he could not exactly take upon himself to say if this was true,—all the people, however, said so, and they ought to know. The spot is in the midst of the forest, to the south of the village of Korkendeh, and is called Haraub-i-shehr (ruins of the city).

A fursuck further than this, we crossed the dry bed of another torrent, called the Koord-mahaleh-chai, from a large village of that name, which it passes about a mile and a half to the north of the road, on its way to the coast. Twelve miles from hence, we arrived at Kafshigeeree, altogether about twenty miles distant from Gez. The Koord-mahaleh-chai divides the districts of Anazon and Seddem Rustauk.

We had travelled nearly all day along the causeway, which, at setting out, was broad and good, but latterly had much deteriorated. It lay chiefly through a thick forest, in which I observed many very fine trees, oak, sycamore, and beech. On these latter, grows a great quantity of mistletoe, with which the inhabitants feed their cattle.

At Kafshigeeree we were welcomed by Rahim Khan, a brother of the owner, Baugher Khan, who was absent; he gave us a very tolerable house, and, while our servants were unpacking our baggage, we ascended a mound close by, similar to those already mentioned, whence we had a fine view over the desert, which had something the

appearance of a sea, except that the horizon was undulating. Two or three large columns of black smoke rose to an immense height in the calm air, and we could plainly distinguish several dark lines, formed by obers, or encampments, of the Toorcomans. The distance from Kafshigeeree to the Karasoo, beyond which is the steppe, is about four miles, and, since the Russians have prevented the Chappows by sea in Mauzunderoon and the west of Astrabad, the inhabitants of this part of the country complain that they have doubly suffered, particularly this year, on account of the absence of the governor, Suleiman Khan, at Tehraun. The Karasoo is no protection whatever, as the Toorcomans ford it where shallow, and where deep swim their horses over. Almost every night some sheep, cows, or men were carried off by these marauders, who, leaving their horses near the open plain, crept into the villages by twos and threes, and, having seized their booty, made their escape under cover of darkness. Since the return of the Governor, their visits have been less frequent, but no retributive steps have been as yet taken, and the inhabitants themselves are afraid to make examples of any plunderers they may catch, as they say, if they kill one, the Toorcomans would, sooner or later, have their revenge, by killing ten in return. When these depredations are made near the residence of a khan, or chief, and the robbers happen to be known, they are sometimes made to restore what they have taken; this, however, is rarely the case, and the loss must most frequently be submitted to.

Descending from the mound, we returned to the village and received a visit from Rahim Khan. In the course of conversation, he told us that the ink used in the province was made from a sap extracted from the orange-tree, mixed with the soot of naphtha smoke, and was very good and durable.

Kafshigeeree contains about an hundred and fifty houses; they are all small, and thatched, with the exception of one in the centre, the residence of Baugher Khan, which is a large tiled house situated in the midst of a garden.

The Sesame, called Kunjiud, is extensively cultivated in this district. The seed is often sprinkled on the flat bread of the country, and the oil produced from it is eaten by the Toorcomans, and largely consumed in the manufacture of soap, a principal article of exportation from Astrabad. The oil is also used as a medicine.

Jan. 19. Having breakfasted in public for the amusement of a respectable assembly of some two dozen open-mouthed natives, who completely blocked up both windows of our room, we departed for Astrabad.

During the day, there was a smart gale from the west; the wind was what the Persians call "baud-i-gherm" (hot wind), a kind of sirocco, which caused me a head-ache, and a very unpleasant feverish sensation.

Our Meerza entertained me with his execrations against the villagers. "Burnt fathers," he said, "I lay on my baggage all night; but no sooner had I closed an eye, than I felt something being pulled

from under me!—I did not sleep a wink; they would rob their own fathers: may their graves be defiled!" It appeared, that these people's idea of *meum* and *tuum* was almost as vague and undefined as that of their Toorcoman neighbours. The distance from Kafshigeeree to Astrabad is about three fursucks over a flat country, skirting the mountains, partly cultivated and partly overrun with jungle; the road was very good for these provinces, passing through several villages.

The previous evening we had sent on our Gholaum to deliver letters, and our firmaun to the Governor; and consequently, at about a mile from the town, we were met by a gay and very numerous istakball. The Gholaum, who was a droll little man, seemed quite delighted at the extent of the procession; and dressed in his gayest clothes, galloped about with a long spear in his hand to the imminent peril of various members of the crowd. He had formerly been in the service of Suleiman Khan; but from his not receiving any pay, added to some additional cause of complaint, he left his family and went over to Ardeshir Meerza in Mauzunderoon. On arriving at the boundary of Astrabad, he told us he was afraid to accompany us any further, lest Suleiman Khan should seize and beat him; but, on being assured that nothing of the kind could happen while he was with us, he recovered his usual composure, and appeared glad of the opportunity of again seeing his family. He now said, that when he presented our letters to the Governor the night before, he looked at him most

fiercely a long time, and then asked him if his belly had not been well enough filled that he had run away from him—an awful pause ensued, and the Gholaum, anxious to change the subject, took upon himself to enumerate a long catalogue of the honours heaped upon us by Ardeshir Meerza, and eloquently described a procession of horse and foot sent out by that Prince to meet us, which never existed save in his own inventive imagination; but to which, perhaps, we were in a measure indebted for the attention now paid us, which was far greater than we had any right to expect.

On entering the town of Astrabad, a couple of files of matchlock men were drawn up, and a body of ten or twelve feroshes headed our now imposing procession, and led the way to the palace. Here we dismounted, and passing through several courts were shown into a private garden, in the centre of which stood a small summer-house and fountain, where we found Suleiman Khan. He is a handsome and perfectly well-mannered man, of about forty years of age, and received us with great cordiality. He is of the Kadger tribe, and a nobleman of high rank. His sister is one of the King's wives, though not a particular favourite, as her nose is a trifle too much hooked: a peculiarity which runs in the family, and is held by the Persians to be very disfiguring. I have seen men that we should term handsome, considered just the reverse merely from having aquiline noses.

In Fathy Ali Shah's time, Suleiman Khan lived in a house of his own at Tehraun as a private gen-

tleman; but, for some political reasons, his property was confiscated and he was thrown into prison. . He remained there for some months, when he was set at liberty and turned adrift on the world without a penny. He then became a dervish and wandered for a year and a-half in Khorassaun, and the Toorcoman desert between Astrabad and Khiva, where he says he was always kindly treated by the Toorcomans. When the present Shah ascended the throne Suleiman Khan returned to Tehraun, and through Hadgee Meerza Aghassee, the prime minister, got some trifling appointment at Tabreez, acting, I believe, as a spy on the late Ameer-i-Nizaum; and, after his death, he obtained the government of Astrabad.

The circumstances which led to his appointment are singular, and will serve as an instance of the manner in which persons are sometimes appointed to different posts without the slightest reference to their abilities or qualifications. An artisan even, in Persia may, by the revolutions of Fortune's wheel, become a Shah; and I have heard it remarked, that there is hardly a man who has not some idea of the possibility of his becoming king. An envoy in Persia once remarked, that the first person to whom he should put such a question would not laugh at the idea nor deny the possibility of the event. A poor Meerza was called and asked by the Envoy, whether he considered it possible that he should be, one day, the Shah of Persia. The man seemed to consider the question for a moment very seriously, and then replied, "God knows."

There is at Tehraun a son of Fathy Ali Shah, Ali Kooly Meerza, whose mother the Hadgee married, and having no children of his own, he took a great liking to the boy, adopted him as his son, and always finds excuses for his various excesses. He is a most dissolute vagabond, generally goes by the name of Hadgeeoglu (Hadgee's son), and lives in great state, which he keeps up by means of the bribes he receives for asking his adopted father to bestow places, pensions, and other good things in his gift to those applicants who pay best. As he has great influence with the Hadgee, who seldom refuses his requests, there is no lack of cash in his coffers. One morning Suleiman Khan went out hunting in the train of Alli Kooly Meerza, and it so happened that the same morning had also been chosen for a hunting excursion by Mohamed Cossim Khan, a son of the Ferosh-bashi (chief of the Feroshes), a powerful nobleman. The two parties took nearly the same direction, and were not far from each other when Mohamed Cossim Khan's dogs started an antelope, and gave chase; the animal ran past the Prince, who fired and killed it just before the dogs. Mohamed Cossim Khan coming up demanded it as his own, and expostulated with the Prince for interfering with his sport. Alli Kooly Meerza refused to give up the antelope; high words ensued, and both parties being heated with wine, a fight took place, in which the Prince cut his antagonist's head open with his kummer, and several persons on both sides were severely wounded. When this became known to the Ferosh-bashi he made bitter

complaints to the Shah, who was very angry, insisted on knowing the rights of the story, and sending for the Hadgee, lectured him on the shameful behaviour of his protegé, which was daily complained of in some way or other. The Hadgee defended his son, and became sulky. For some time no one would say anything either way, fearing the consequences, as both parties were very powerful; but at last Suleiman Khan came forward with a most plausible account of the affair, which he had witnessed from beginning to end; swore on the Koran that the Prince was perfectly right, and his opponent consequently wrong, and by dint of a few lies, and a plausible tongue, which he possesses in an eminent degree, he managed completely to exculpate the Prince, much to the Hadgee's delight. Two days afterwards Suleiman Khan was made Governor of Astrabad, to the astonishment of everybody, as these places are generally handsomely paid for, and it was well known that he did not possess a kurraun; since then he has probably been endeavouring to put his treasury in a more flourishing condition to meet future emergencies.

While we were sitting in the summer-house taking tea and talking, a Gholaum was brought forward, who had been called to show two gashes in his head and shoulder received from a Toorcoman, during the Khan's absence at Tehraun. An order had been issued, that on account of the failure of the crops, no rice should be sold to the Toorcoman tribes; the Gholaum found a man transgressing this order, and, as a servant of the govern-

ment, interfered to prevent the sale; whereupon the buyer, a Toorcoman, drew his sword, and inflicted the wounds. The man had been taken, and was to pay a fine of five horses, two of which were to be given to the Gholaum, and three to the Governor. It was at first intended to kill the delinquent, but the levying a fine had afterwards been determined on, as more profitable to all parties. This is one of many similar cases, which are frequently occurring here.

A crowd of attendants were present, and the "Reish-i-Sefeed" (white beards), of the place were introduced to us, and a variety of compliments paid on the occasion. All were soon dismissed, and the Khan himself showed us to our lodgings, two small rooms of an unfinished house, in a corner of the garden, exhibiting most unpleasant symptoms of damp.

In the evening Suleiman Khan dined with us, and was accompanied by Humza Khan, the chief of the Anazon district, a little, stout man, with a very black beard and yellow face, evidently a favourite, from a talent he possessed of saying "Belli, belli," (yes, yes,) in answer to every word uttered by his superior.

In the course of conversation remarks being made upon the nature and character of the inhabitants of Astrabad, the Khan said, "Oh, they are beasts, rascals; they are very bad;" and told us that, a few days since, one of them had enticed an aged uncle into the desert, and there sold him for eight kurrauns to a Toorcoman, with whom he had appointed a meeting for the purpose! that he, (the

Khan), had heard of this, and by good luck managed to seize both the buyer and seller; and that, considering this a horrid crime, requiring a severe example, he proposed, on the morrow, to boil the Astrabaddee in a cauldron, and then kill the Toorcoman, having first made him breakfast on a boiled leg of the nephew! The Khan drank off his wine and smacked his lips, as he said this, with infinite satisfaction and composure, and Humza Khan seemed to think the sentence unexceptionable, as, stroking his beard, he muttered Belli, belli, Inshallah! inshallah (please God). It appeared to us, however, rather horrible than otherwise, and we begged that some more merciful mode of punishment should be adopted. "What you say is very true," observed the Khan, "mercy is a very good thing in its way, but you little know the people I have to deal with: — were I not to make an example of this fellow, in less than a week, by your fortunate heads, there would not be an uncle left in all Astrabad! However, as you have made the request, we will try to find some other punishment." "Belli, belli," chimed in Humza Khan.

The dinner was a nondescript sort of thing, consisting of various kebobs, pillaws, pickles, sherbets, wine, and rum. It was something similar to that of Ardeshir Meerza, but not quite so tedious, though it lasted at least three hours. Suleiman Khan was completely at his ease, took off his cap (not to differ from ourselves; though the Persians seldom or never do so but in the anderoon,) and drank his wine, as did Humza Khan,

without the slightest hesitation or scruple. Two singers were called in who performed till long after we were tired of hearing their monotonous quaverings. At last the Khan began to sing himself, and gape, roll about, and laugh, when there was nothing to laugh at; and finally, after being exceedingly puzzled to know why he could not snuff the candles, bade us good night with a peculiarly benevolent expression of countenance, and many shakes of the hand.

During the night the wind blew most violently, but the morning turned out bright and calm. The Governor breakfasted with us, and afterwards took us to a small summer-house, which he had lately built, a little to the south of the town, near the foot of the mountains; it commanded a very extensive view, and as the Khan had two capital English telescopes we were the better enabled to enjoy it. Before us at a few hundred yards distance to the north-west were the mud walls and ruined towers of Astrabad, and from the west round the horizon as far as north-east were stretched the plains of Gourgaun and Goklaun, the commencement of the Toorcoman desert. Towards the other points of the compass lay the mountains, thickly wooded, except on the highest peaks, which were covered with snow. Between Astrabad and the edge of the steppe runs a tract of country four miles broad, which extends west and east as far as the eye can reach. This belt is partly wooded and partly cultivated, being towards the south separated from the desert by the

river Karasoo, the waters of which were occasionally seen as they sparkled in the sunbeams. The ruins of the walls and fortifications of Augkaleh lay on the other side of the river due north, about ten miles in the desert. This town formerly belonged to the Kadjers, but was sacked by the Toorcomans sixty years ago, and has since been uninhabited. The bare rocky summit of the mountain of Moraun bore due east thirty-two miles distant, where are to be found the remains of an old fortress called Moraun Kaleh, consisting now of a well, a dungeon, and a small open space. It is only accessible by one path, and that is difficult. About twenty-five years ago Mohamed Zemaun Khan, Kadjer, then Governor of Astrabad, having rebelled against Fathy Ali Shah, seized all the chiefs of his tribe on whom he could lay hands, and confined them in this castle, which, in case of necessity, would probably be again used as a prison or place of safety. The rebel was afterwards taken and put to a cruel death, his eyes being first pulled out, and then his teeth drawn and hammered into his head.

We remained in this summer-house talking and drinking tea, sherbets, and wine, until sunset; when the Khan made his Namaz (said his prayers), taking a tumbler of wine and smoking a kalleoon in an interval of his devotions, which I may observe were none of the longest.

We then returned to our quarters, and soon afterwards dinner was served; our host was in high spirits, and proposed a shooting party; and, at the

same time, a visit to the desert on the morrow, to which we agreed. He continued laughing and joking during the greater part of the evening, until, while pouring out a glass of rum for one of his singers, he suddenly made a pause—put down the bottle—frowned—pulled his beard and mustachios, pushed his plate away from him, and exhibited signs of being excessively annoyed and angry. We could not understand this at all; no one had said or done any thing to offend him, and yet his demeanour had totally changed in a moment. At last, seeing that he remained silent, we asked what was the matter? "Nothing," he replied, "it is nothing;" and fixed his eyes fiercely on the mutton. On pressing him a little, we found that in pouring out the rum, he had happened to spill a little on the table-cloth, and felt exceedingly annoyed and ashamed, thinking that we should suppose him tipsy. We had neither of us noticed the trifling accident which had so disconcerted him; and having assured him, that the same frequently happened to ourselves without anything of the kind being suspected, he resumed his dinner, but all his gaiety was effectually routed for the remainder of the evening, and he soon after rose to depart, saying, he would send to awaken us early on the morrow, that we might have a long day before us.

Jan. 21. About an hour after we were dressed, a man came to say that the Khan was ready, and conducted us to an open court near his anderoon, where we found him surrounded by a motley assembly of retainers, armed and dressed in almost every possible variation of eastern costume. Some were

already mounted; some were on foot examining their weapons, and others were holding the horses of the Governor, and the various khans in attendance. Suleiman Khan's son, a beautiful little lad of about nine years old, who appeared his father's pet, was loading his diminutive gun in high glee, and impatient to be off.

After the usual salutations, and when we were mutually satisfied as to the fatness of each other's brains and the state of our spirits, we mounted. Six or eight wretchedly-accoutred horse-soldiers in fancy uniforms, no two being alike, headed the procession; and their trumpeter, dressed in an old, stained red coat, much too small for him, and slit all across the shoulders, having sounded his cracked instrument, the cavalcade moved off.

At the gates of the town, the guard of matchlock men, who are always in attendance, presented arms, and here all those who were on foot were dismissed and returned, while we proceeded across the country at a brisker pace. Our party amounted to seventy or eighty well-armed horsemen, as the Khan would have had strong objections to trust himself in an ober of Toorcomans with a smaller number; and we also thought that their presence added much to the gaiety and pleasure of the excursion, particularly as we wished to come back again the same evening, and had no inclination whatever to learn to tend cattle in the vicinity of the Oxus, or the Lake Aral. During the ride I amused myself talking to the little boy before-mentioned: he had lately accompanied his father to Tehraun; but, he said, in

his opinion, Astrabad was a much more lively residence than the capital: near the former, he said, was the desert; and he could ride and shoot, and make chappows against the Toorcomans; but the latter was all enclosed by walls; and when one did ride outside, there was nobody to fight with, and no shooting. I could not help laughing at the idea of the little fellow making chappows against the Toorcomans; and asked him how many he had slain on these occasions: "Oh!" he said, "not any yet;" Inshallah! he hoped to do so some day or other; but he had seen a great many killed, which had delighted him amazingly.

Near the edge of the steppe we passed the village of Mehmet-abad, surrounded by a deep ditch, and having a mud tower in the centre, pierced with loopholes for musketry. Soon afterwards we got clear of the jungle, and were met by a small body of Toorcomans, among whom were Orauz Kooly Khan, Omer Khan, Oderboy Khan, and several other chiefs, who had come to welcome our host. They were mounted on fine horses, but were poorly dressed, and one would not by any means have taken them for chieftains. Some of them had scanty beards, but many none at all; and their features were different from those of the Persians. They accompanied us to the edge of the Karasoo, which is more like a moordaub than a river, there being scarcely any current, and the banks being marshy, and covered with reeds. Ten or twelve nohs were here prepared for us, in which we embarked, each sportsman having one to himself. A number of natives with

matchlocks were despatched all round the edges of the neighbouring swamps among the reeds, to raise the birds should they take refuge there. We found at first nothing but bald-coots, which, as usual, were in great quantities: the boats spread in a long line across the water, and drove them all into one corner, whence they flew over our heads, and a tremendous fire was opened on them, each person having two or three guns: every time a bird fell, the boatmen shouted "Barikellah!" (well done,) and the laughing and splashing, with the other accompaniments of the scene, rendered this shooting-party one of the most original I ever witnessed. The coots having now fled to the other end of the swamp, we turned about, and repaired thither in a long line, each one recounting his own exploits, and rallying his neighbour's. Here, two sportsmen were in violent dispute, concerning their mutual claims to a bird which both had fired at, and of which nothing remained but a wing or a leg, the rest having been blown to atoms—there, some awkward gentleman had just let off his gun by mistake, and carried away part of the side of his boat, much to his own terror and that of his friends, who strenuously advised him to give up shooting altogether, or practise it by himself. One man's powder was expended, and he was shouting to those nearest him (who appeared exceedingly deaf), for a fresh supply; and an old khan, who had been staring at me for some ten minutes or more, discovered that during that time he had been trailing the butt end of his matchlock in the water, wetting the match, and effectually

putting his gun *hors-de-combat* for the remainder of the day—to console himself for which, he commenced a string of execrations against the weapon and the man who made it, and his grandfather, and grandmother, and wife, and all his generation, adding, "might their livers dry up!" The rear was brought up in rather a novel manner by the Khan's singer, who made himself black in the face with his exertions: for whose amusement these were intended it was impossible to say, as none of the sportsmen ever thought of him. Having arrived at the other end of the moordaub, we found an immense quantity of ducks; very few, however, were killed, and we had again recourse to the coots, which we followed backwards and forwards till all were heartily tired; when mounting our horses, we repaired to breakfast at Nargisse Tuppeh, where was an encampment of the Jaffer Boy tribe.

On arriving, we were met by the male part of the inhabitants, and a more ragged, dirty-looking set of vagabonds I never set eyes on. The women remained at the doors of the tents; their head-dresses were the most unbecoming sort of things, in that way, I ever saw. I had no opportunity of examining one closely, and cannot presume to say how or of what it is made, but in appearance it resembled a large bandbox, decorated in front with rows of gold and silver coins, and covered on the top and behind by a kind of veil of printed calico, or some other stuff, which hung down nearly to the heels. The Toorcoman women are not confined in the same manner as

the Persian, and do not totally conceal their faces; it is considered indelicate, however, to expose the mouth and throat, which are, therefore, always covered with a white bandage.

The ober consisted of forty or fifty circular tents, with dome-like tops, and we were conducted to that of the chief, who happened to be absent. It was formed of trellis-work, which could be taken to pieces and folded up, covered outside with thick nummuds; in the centre of the floor a small hole was dug for the fire, and the smoke escaped through an opening in the top, which could be closed at pleasure by a fold of the nummud; in short, the general formation of these tents is very similar to those of the Shahsevens of Mishkeen, already described. The floor was spread with carpets and felts, and the sides hung round with various bags containing provisions, and there were also several large wooden boxes, in which the baggage is packed when on a march. We were received by the wife of the great man, a little, old lady, who, though ugly and shrivelled, looked uncommonly clean and respectable. She said we were welcome, and made a few answers to the numerous compliments of Suleiman Khan, but she could not be prevailed on to sit down, and soon left the tent. She was a curious figure, and it is difficult to describe her costume. Her hands were adorned with several large cornelian rings, and I could perceive the ends of various robes and trowsers, of blue, white, and scarlet, but could form no idea of their internal economy or arrange-

ment, as she was almost entirely enveloped by a white veil depending from the hideous headgear, which was so large, and she so small, that her face appeared nearly in the centre of her body.

When she had departed, a good-looking, merry old fellow, one of the white-beards of the encampment, at the request of the Khan, brought a small two-stringed instrument, something like a guitar, which he touched with great skill, and sometimes produced a wild and pleasing harmony. After a short prelude, he sang a comic song with much spirit; I did not understand a word, but I could easily perceive from his style, tone, and gesture, that he was no mean artist.

The tent was then cleared for breakfast, but, with the exception of a couple of kids roasted whole and some yoghoort, (sour milk,) it was prepared by the Khan's people, and needs no description. The repast over, we went outside, and the Khan threw some small coins among the children to scramble for, and made them run races and wrestle, to the infinite delight of the breechless young ragamuffins, who endeavoured to cheat each other in every possible manner.

As it was getting late, we mounted and rode to the river. Several horses had been led out before us which were presents to the Khan; none of them were very famous. A couple of felt horse-cloths were presented to us.

We were now on the Gourgaun side of the Karasoo, which we had crossed in the boats after shooting; the horses had been brought, by a cir-

cuitous route, over a rude bridge of sticks and reeds. We again embarked, and, while the cattle were being conducted by the bridge to the other side, commenced another attack on the bald coots. Having slaughtered some fifty or sixty more, we reached the opposite shore just as the sun set. We had about four miles to ride back to Astrabad, and, as the Khan and his people were going to say their namaz, we took leave of them at once, and, with our own attendants, made the best of our way home.

The evening was very cold and damp; an unwholesome vapour rose from the jungle, and it was long after dark before we reached Astrabad, feeling very tired, and having severe headaches from the heat of the sun, to which we had been exposed all day. Suleiman Khan arrived soon afterwards, and, with true good breeding, seeing that we were much fatigued, made some excuses and declined troubling us any more for the evening, and, having given orders that everything we wished for should be supplied, bade us good night.

About an hour afterwards, we retired to rest; and, all night long, Barikellahs, coots, matchlocks, moordaubs, and Toorcoman head-dresses, were mixed up in my brain in one long confused dream, till I woke with a violent start the next morning, fully persuaded that I was shot through the small of my back, while a frightful Barikellah was still ringing in my ears.

CHAPTER XV.

A Squirrel Hunter.—Yussuf Khan.—Astrabad.—Bazars.—Streets.—The Palace.—Artillery.—Trade.—Revenue.—Province of Astrabad.—Administration.—The Governor and the Toorcomans.—Border Warfare.—Character of the Toorcomans.—Their Appearance—Their Trade.—Horses.—Revenue of the Province.—Military Force.—Probable Population.—The Climate.—The Roads.—Rivers.—Fisheries.—Productions.—Coal in Shahkoo.—Antiquities.

Jan. 23. THIS morning some game was brought, which had been killed by the native sportsmen. There were several pheasants, and two or three francolins. These, and the little bustard, are every where abundant in the desert; the pheasants were killed in the jungle. 'Apropos of sporting, there is a man here, a perfect phenomenon in that way. He is a squirrel-catcher, and these animals are very numerous at Astrabad. He hunts entirely by scent, smelling about the trees, till he comes to a hole, indicated by his nose as the residence of a squirrel; he then sticks in a long iron rod, with a hook at the end, and seldom fails to draw out the inhabitant. The skins are, I believe, used in making pelisses, though I am not certain, as the Persians are very scrupulous in the use of furs, some of which they will not wear; of these they say, "Na-

maz ne dared," literally "It has not prayer," meaning that it is not lawful to pray in a dress of that kind of skin. If, on the contrary, it is not forbidden, they say "Namaz dared," "It has prayer." The fur of the polecat is their most usual and favourite wear.

This day, and the greater part of the next, we remained at home writing letters, as a chuppar was about to be despatched to Tehraun.

In the evening we received a visit from one Yussuf Khan, a Khivian, who, in the course of conversation regarding Bokhara, and the unfortunate English detained or murdered there, said that he had only heard of the death of one of them, who, from his account, appeared to be Captain Conolly. Yussuf Khan expected to be at Bokhara during the spring, and promised most faithfully to inform us correctly whether either of them were alive; or, if executed, of the particulars of their death. It is impossible to say how far this man could be relied on; but it little matters, as every doubt which existed as to the fate of the unfortunate captives has been removed, by the bold and philanthropic journey undertaken by the Rev. Dr. Wolff.

For the last two days the weather had been cloudy and windy, and a considerable quantity of snow had fallen on the mountains. On the twenty fifth, after breakfast, I walked to a hill to the south-west of the city, where once stood a mud fortress; the only remains are the traces of the walls, and a few heaps of rubbish. From thence there was a tolerable bird's-eye view of Astrabad,

ASTRABAD.

Richard Bentley, New Burlington St. 1845

after sketching which, I returned home through the bazars.

Astrabad, or Istrabad, the chief and only city of the province, is situated at the foot of the mountains, on the south-east angle of the Caspian. The meaning of the name is "star inhabited," from "Istara," a star, and "Abad," inhabited. It is enclosed within a crenellated mud wall, about eighteen feet high, and four miles in circumference, flanked by a series of round-towers. The wall has once been strengthened by a ditch, now, in most places, filled up. These defences, particularly on the north and eastern sides of the town, are in ruins, and would oppose no obstacle to an attack. There are three gateways, one to the west, where the walls are in the best repair, one to the south, and one to the north-east; they are roofed, and have small chambers on each side, serving as a lodging for the guard. The jungle, which formerly approached close to the walls on all sides, has in a great measure disappeared, and given place to cultivation.

The present town by no means fills up the space enclosed, which is partly occupied by gardens and heaps of rubbish, the remains of former habitations. It is divided into three mahalehs, and is said to contain between two thousand, and two thousand three hundred houses. These are built with mud, or sun-dried bricks, in the same open style as those throughout Gheelaun and Mauzunderoon. Many of them have small gardens filled with orange, pomegranate, cherry, and other fruit-trees; and the tops

of the walls being planted with irises, gilliflowers, and stocks, the place in spring has a very cheerful and pleasing appearance. Mr. Fraser makes mention of lofty baudgheers, (wind-catchers), but I could not see any, and was informed that none existed; the only building, anything like one, was the tall, square minaret of a mosque, which might have been taken for a baudgheer.

Astrabad possesses some ten or twelve medressahs, and eight or nine of those reservoirs for cooling water, called aub-ambars, before alluded to at Saree. The town is inhabited by the natives of the province, among whom may be reckoned four hundred families of the Kadjar tribe; but here, as in all other Asiatic towns, it is impossible to form a just idea of the population, as the number of individuals composing a family differs so widely according to the rank and consideration of its head. During the winter the weather is generally mild, though damp and unhealthy; but the heat in summer becomes intense: and at that season, the Governor with about two hundred of the richer inhabitants, retire to their yeilauks, situated among the mountains, on one of the roads to Tehraun.

There are thre caravanserais adjoining the bazars, which are about the extent of those of Saree, and exhibit the same kind of merchandise, though the shops are not so well furnished, nor is there an appearance of equal activity. They are meanly built, and in some places in ruins.

The streets were all originally paved, probably by Shah Abbas, when he made the causeway; and

though they have, doubtless, been occasionally repaired, the present condition of the principal thoroughfares is very dilapidated. They are partly broken up, and the channels by which the water used to run off being thus interrupted, pools are formed, which become larger every day by the loosening of the adjacent stones. Some of the less frequented streets are in better condition, and the paving is sound though uneven.

There are neither ancient nor modern buildings of any interest. The palace, where the Governor resides, was built by Aga Mohamed Khan; it consists of several audience-halls and other apartments, the principal of which, though now spoilt and half in ruins, were once gaily decorated with gilding and paintings. There are also two or three large square courts, and a private garden, where we lodged. In one of the gateways of the former the artillery of the town is kept, consisting of two field-pieces, one of nine pounds and the other of four. This latter was an English gun, bearing the date of 1805. They are in charge of a Sultaun or captain, and thirty-five topchees (artillerymen). The Anderoon is a separate building, surrounded by high walls and situated a short distance from the palace, towards the south.

Some forty or fifty petty merchants, residing at Astrabad, carry on a trade with the surrounding provinces. Some of it is in transit to Meshed, and the chools and nummuds of the Toorcomans are sent to Tehraun, and from thence to all parts of Persia; the remainder seems to be almost entirely

confined to the consumption of the town and neighbouring villages.

The imports from Tehraun are, European manufactures, chiefly English, also silks and velvets from Cashan.

Russia — cloth, iron, glass, hardware, painted boxes, loaf-sugar, prints, chinaware, and a very small quantity of tea.

Khiva—ox-hides and various skins.

Meshed—a few cloaks and other manufactures.

Toorcomans—nummuds, chools, salt, horses, and naphtha.

The exports are: soap, of which a great deal is manufactured here, and goes to all the neighbouring provinces.

Oil of sesame and the seed, sent to Russia and the neighbouring provinces, and also used in the manufacture of soap.

Chools and nummuds in transit to all parts of Persia and also to Russia.

Manufactures of Cashan and British goods, in transit to Meshed.

Rice and corn, to the Toorcomans.

Cotton; a small quantity to Russia and Gheelaun.

No duties are levied on the inland trade on this side of the mountains. The Russians pay the usual five per cent. The customs are farmed by the Governor; but though I questioned him several times on the subject, he evidently wished to evade it, and each time gave a widely different reply.

I endeavoured to ascertain from the merchants

the quantities of the respective goods, and the total annual amount of this trade; but I received such contradictory and unsatisfactory information that it would be useless to attempt any specification. I believe that no one is well-informed as to its extent or value; it cannot, however, be considerable.

During two years a Russian Armenian imported goods to the amount of about thirty thousand tomauns. He sold them at exceedingly low prices; he gave large presents to the different influential people, and made every endeavour to conciliate the natives; yet last year when he began to erect storehouses near the village of Gez, an outcry was raised that he was building a fort, and the works were burnt down by order of Humza Khan. All his efforts to settle in the country have hitherto proved unavailing; and I have heard both the Governor and Humza Khan repeatedly declare that they would never allow a Russian to establish himself. This year, at the expected time, the Armenian did not appear; and the attempt has, probably, been given up in disgust. It is universally believed that this Armenian was an agent, and the goods the property of the Russian government. The chief ground for the supposition was, that no private merchant could have afforded to give so much in presents, while selling at such unusually low prices; something, also, must be allowed for the extreme jealousy with which the Russians are regarded.

The revenue derived from the town amounts to six hundred tomauns, of which a hundred is the

property of the Crown, and the remainder belongs to the Governor. The office of Durrogha (head of police) is farmed for two hundred and fifty tomauns, and the remainder is derived from the taxes on shops.

The province of Astrabad is bounded on the west by Mauzunderoon, on the south by the Elburz chain, and on the north and east by the Caspian and the plains Gourgaun and Goklaun.

It is divided into the following districts under their respective Governors:—

Anazon, governed by Humza Khan.

Seddem Rustauk, by Mohamed Vallee Khan.

Astrabad (city and province), governed by Suleiman Khan.

Astrabad Rustauk, governed by Ali Asker Khan.

Katool — including the district of Fakr-imaud-u-deen, now waste and uninhabited . . . . } by Mohamed Saadi Khan.

Kaboot Iameh — including the districts of Fenderesk, Freng, Forsian, Chenesk, Conchi, Sorver, and Shahkoo . . . . . } by Meerza Assadoollah Khan, Governor of Goklaun.

The two former lie to the west of Astrabad; Kabout Iameh, along the south; Astrabad Rustauk to the north; and the remainder to the east: but their relative positions, and the names of the tribes generally dwelling on the plains of Gourgaun opposite them, will be better seen by the following rough sketch.

The general administration is entirely in the hands of Suleiman Khan. He is active; and considering

his difficult position, governing a frontier province, always exposed to the inroads of his neighbours, he seems to maintain it in tolerable order and security; and the condition of the peasantry is not worse than in Mauzunderoon.

Some time in February he intended to make his annual visit to the Toorcomans, accompanied by a body of about three thousand horse and foot, to obtain reparation for the thefts committed during the year, and also to collect the revenue. On inquiring how his men were supported while in the desert, he said, that he always gave them a month's notice that he should require their services for forty days; and that each man must bring his food, and otherwise provide for himself during that time: if they were kept out longer, the Khan bore the expense.

Encampments of the tribes noted in the sketch, always remain about the same grounds, summer and winter. In summer, however, they are much more numerous and powerful; as towards winter a great many retire to the vicinity of Khiva, leaving comparatively few behind. It is then that the Governor seizes the opportunity to make them pay their dues, and give satisfaction for thefts committed in the summer. "During six months of the year," said the Khan, "I am obliged to be very civil to them; they steal without much fear of consequences, and can almost do what they like; but in the remaining six months comes my turn, and I thus manage to keep pretty even with them." There is, however, a continual border warfare carried on; and many are the

stratagems of defence and offence resorted to on both sides. Some time ago, the Khan had established a set of private signals with the different districts around Astrabad, by means of his guns; so that when news was brought that the Toorcomans were making a chappow at such a place, one, two, or three guns were fired, as had been agreed on, to indicate that particular direction, and all who heard the sounds hastened to the spot. The enemy, however, soon became acquainted with the meaning of the signals; and whenever they heard them, sent succour to the scene of action. The Governor perceiving this, and wishing to make reprisals on a certain encampment which had been plundering extensively, set out one morning with a party of men; and having arrived at the edge of the desert within sight of the tents, concealed himself in the jungle. He then despatched a man to Astrabad, with orders to the artillerymen to fire the signal for an attack in a different quarter. The guns were heard by both parties; and the Toorcomans thinking that some of their friends were engaged in a foray, immediately armed, mounted, and hurried off to their assistance in the designated direction, leaving their own camp entirely unprotected, which, as soon as they were fairly gone, Suleiman Khan attacked and plundered, carrying off three hundred old men, women and children, besides cattle. He was now meditating how to keep them more effectually in order, and talked of building three towers along the frontier, to be garrisoned by matchlock men; but, unless he is assisted by Government, which I think rather

unlikely, things will, in all probability, remain as they are.

These tribes also plunder one another, as well as their Astrabad neighbours. Last year an ober in Goklaun received secret news, that on a certain day a body of three hundred men, from a distant encampment, intended to attack them. On hearing this they immediately armed a similar party, and laying an ambush in a small defile, through which the invaders had to pass, fell on them unexpectedly, killed nearly every man, and took all their horses. The affair soon came to the ears of the Governor, who hastened to the place, claiming a considerable number of the cattle as his right, and, according to custom, sent the skins of the dead men's heads to Tehraun, as a present to the Shah.

As a people, the Toorcomans cannot be called brave. They never attack, unless in such numbers that resistance is useless; and their object being merely plunder, they will never fight when it can possibly be avoided. They have a profound objection to fire-arms, particularly cannon; and Suleiman Khan assured me, that at the sight of three or four Astrabaddee matchlock-men, he had seen a body of some forty horsemen take to flight with the utmost precipitation. The Toorcoman is generally armed with a curved sabre and a spear, much longer than that used by the Koords; some have also pistols and a gun. I saw no fine men among them the day I visited the encampment at Nargisse Tuppeh; they were of low stature, and had a thievish and disagreeable expression of countenance, in many

cases heightened by the scanty and irregular tufts of hair on their chins, which are objects of great pride to the fortunate possessor, as beards are of rare occurrence among them.

They send to Astrabad naphtha, from the island of Tcheleken; salt from Balkan, and chools, nummuds, and horses; receiving in return wheat, rice, sugar, manufactures, and some iron caldrons from Russia, through Meshid-i-sir. Their horses are large, bony animals, and are celebrated throughout Persia as possessing remarkable powers of endurance. Those belonging to the Tucckee Toorcomans (who dwell somewhere in the vicinity of the Lake Aral,) are particularly esteemed, and have no manes. They say that this is a peculiarity of the breed; but it is, I believe, not the fact. From the continual rubbing of the heavy felt clothing in which the animals are always enveloped, to the very nose, the mane is made very rugged and unsightly. To obviate this the hair is plucked out, and a hot iron passed over it, which, added to the friction of the clothing, prevents its growing again. Yahmoot horses, however, generally have a ragged mane; they are clothed in the same way as the Tucckee horses, but, I presume, their manes are not treated like the others.

The Toorcomans, who inhabit the plains of Gourgaun, cultivate the land, besides pasturing large herds of cattle, and, I was told, pay a revenue of about three kurrauns each tent per annum; but that from the Toorcomans on the plains of Goklaun, seven kurrauns was required, as the land there is much more fertile.

The total revenue of the province of Astrabad amounts to about 12,700 tomauns:

6000	from	the	Province.
6000	„	„	Toorcomans.
600	„	„	Town.
100	„	„	Fisheries.
Tomauns 12,700			

Of this 2000 tomauns are allowed the Khan as salary, 1000 tomauns are given to his wife, and 1000 to his eldest son, making 4000 tomauns, or 2000*l.*, to the Governor and family, though he probably manages to obtain more than double that sum by means of fines, confiscations, presents, &c. The remainder of the revenue is expended in the salaries of different government officers, and a part, though I fancy a very small one, is appropriated to the pay of a few of the Toofenkchees, of whom the number in this province is stated to be between two and three thousand. They are all matchlock-men, and their nominal pay is 10 tomauns a-year. The nature of their service is the same as that of the armed force in Mauzunderoon and Gheelaun.

It is as impossible to obtain any account of the population of the province as of the town, and more difficult to form a correct guess; however, that part which we have seen appears to be well inhabited, and I have been informed that on an average each division contains about thirty villages. Supposing each village to contain sixty houses, and each house five individuals, it would give a population of

eighty-three thousand. It is possible that this may be some approximation to the truth. The dress of the people is the same as that of Mauzunderoonees, and most of them speak both Persian and Turkish. Besides the native peasantry, there are about a hundred families from Karabaugh settled here, called Maksoolees, and from a hundred and twenty to a hundred and thirty familes of Beloochees. Of the Kadjer tribe there are now only about five hundred families—four hundred in the town, and a hundred among the villages; the rest are scattered all over Persia with the various governors of provinces, who have been chosen from this tribe, to which the Shah belongs. It is divided into two branches, called the Yokaribash and Ashaghabash (the upper and lower).*

The climate of Astrabad is unwholesome, being excessively hot in summer, and damp and often cold in winter. Wherever we went we found the people with bad colds and coughs, every one looked pale and haggard, and I do not remember seeing a rosy cheek in the whole province. There is a good deal of rainy weather, which occurs mostly in the spring and autumn. None, or very few, of the natives retire to Yeilauks; the only instance of any change of quarters that I heard of, was from the village of Koord-mahaleh in Seddem Rustauk, whence about seventy families remove annually to Resht, and return in the winter.

The roads are much the same as in Mauzunde-

* See Appendix (D).

roon,—partly good, and partly swampy, and difficult.*

Astrabad possesses many torrents, which, in the autumn, become either dry, or small rivulets, but can boast of only one river, the Korasoo. The Gourgaun and the Attreck are in a territory in a measure subject to Persia, and under the government of the province, but can hardly be said to belong to it geographically. The water of the Attreck is salt in summer, when there is little of it, as it flows through some salt soil; but in winter, when the river is full, the taste is not perceptible. The Gourgaun is a fine stream, and always sweet. There are sturgeon fisheries at the mouths of all these streams, and also in the Bay of Astrabad, which a year ago were rented for a hundred tomauns. The right to them is now disputed between the Armenian Stepan, the lessee of the Mauzunderoon fisheries, and Meer Aboo Talib Khan, of Gheelaun; and the case has been referred to Tehraun.

The agricultural productions of Astrabad are, rice, barley, wheat, cotton, and sesame.

Several kinds of kerbauz, a native manufacture of cotton, are made, and a considerable quantity of soap.

The mountainous districts, as indeed the whole range of the Elburz, are rich in mineral productions, particularly iron. Coal is found in Shahkoo, but the people do not well understand how to

* See Appendix (E).

work the mines. I was told by a man connected with them, that twenty small shafts, or rather holes, had been dug, but had not been carried to any depth. A small village, called Tash (stone), has been formed on the spot by the workmen.

I am not aware of any antiquities, or remains, save the mounds before mentioned, and a curious old tower, called the Goombuz-e-Caoos, in the plains of Gourgaun, said to have been erected by Yezzid-ibn-Mehlub, an Arabian general, and to be the only remains of the ancient city of Jorjan, or, as it is now called, Gourgaun.

CHAPTER XVI.

An Execution.—Fate of the Nephew who sold his Uncle.—The Moharrem.—Gibbon's Account of Hossein's Death—The Persian Story.—Representation of the Return of Hossein's Family to Medina.—Effect on the Multitude.—A large Tree.—Further Ceremonies usual at the Moharrem.

Jan. 26. CONFINED during the day in a small room, the weather being too hot to go out, and in the evening too damp and unwholesome to do so without risk, we began to be heartily sick of Astrabad, and wished to be once more on the move.

This evening, however, an incident occurred, which broke the usual monotony. Just before sunset, while taking a constitutional turn in the garden, we heard the loud report of a cannon in the adjoining yard; but as it was the season of the Moharrem, and guns were being continually discharged in different parts of the town, we took no notice of the circumstance, and continued our walk. A few minutes afterwards, Suleiman Khan with his two sons and some attendants entered the garden. He came towards us half laughing and half pretending to be angry, though evidently delighted, and exclaimed, "Look here! What shall I do? This Jansiz Khan," (pointing to his eldest son, a lad of about seventeen years of age,) "this

Jansiz Khan has been blowing away a Toorcoman from a gun, without consulting me, or in any way having my permission. What shall I do? Vai! Vai!" There were smiles on all the surrounding faces, and the Khan himself could, with difficulty, refrain from laughing; we therefore supposed that a joke was meant to be practised upon us, and began to laugh likewise. Their repeated assurances of the fact, however, soon made us understand that there was small matter for joking, but that a human being had been massacred by a boy, without warrant or authority. "By Allah! By your heads, it is so!" said the Khan; "go and see." We went, and there lay the remains of the unfortunate wretch, a bloody and sickening spectacle. The legs had been tied by the heels to the gun-carriage, and had just fallen in front of it: the body had been blown to atoms, and its blood and fragments were spattered against the opposite wall. One arm had been torn off from the shoulder, and the other with the head attached to it lay near. The countenance was rather handsome, and as if composed in sleep; and though this mode of death is very horrible to the spectators, it must be without pain to the victim. The man's name was Mourud Allee, of the Otterboy tribe, a well-known offender, who had at different times stolen four men, and sold them as slaves at Khiva, besides carrying off quantities of cattle. He was caught coming into the town for the same purpose, and the punishment happened to be just and necessary; but the unceremonious manner in which it was performed, with-

out any kind of inquiry, at the order of a mere boy, and the levity and total want of feeling exhibited on the occasion, were altogether disgusting. He died without making any supplication for mercy, or without uttering a single word.

Jan. 27. The Khan paid us his usual visit at breakfast, and in the course of conversation intimated his intention of likewise blowing away the gentleman who had sold his uncle, saying that the execution should take place on the morrow, and that he would give us notice in time to witness it. We, however, declined, and once more begged that the man's life might be spared, and some other punishment decided on. "Well," said the Khan, "while you are here, he shall live."—"And when we are gone?" interrupted my friend.—"He must die,—the Mollahs have so decided." Several months afterwards I heard that the man's nose, ears, a hand and a foot, had been cut off, and that he had died in consequence. Among such a people some degree of severity is undoubtedly necessary, and similar examples, were they occasionally made, would go a great way to prevent their malpractices; but it is to be regretted that sometimes governors are lenient, and allow culprits to escape with impunity; at other times they prefer the more profitable alternative of a fine; so that the example of a terrible fate is seldom presented to the people to deter them from crime.

The Moharrem began on the evening of the twenty-first of January; the first ten days are set

apart for the celebration of the death of the Imaums Hossein and Hassan, and are kept with strict attention to religious observances. During this season, wine-drinkers abstain from such an infraction of their holy laws, and those at other times little scrupulous will not eat with such as are considered unclean by strict Sheahs. In every mahal of the town, one or more large buildings, called takiehs, had been prepared at the expense of the inhabitants, or by some rich individual, as an act of devotion, for the various performances of the season, and were open to all classes without payment of any kind. They were decorated with shawls, tinsel, festoons of artificial flowers, evergreens, and printed callicoes,—though it appeared to me that the gay ornaments were rather out of keeping with the tragic scenes to be enacted, and with the groans and tears of the spectators.

Hassan, the elder brother of Hossein, and whose name is associated with his in this season of mourning, occupies no prominent part in history.

Hossein was the second son of Allee; and on the death of his father (whose eventful life was terminated by the poisoned dagger of an assassin, in the mosque at Cufa), having refused to recognise Yezid, King of Damascus, as the legitimate Caliph, was obliged to retire to Mecca. Hossein's cause was espoused by the inhabitants of Cufa, who invited him to take refuge among them, acknowledging him their lawful Caliph, and proclaiming Yezid an usurper. The insurrection which this occasioned

was almost immediately quelled by Obeidoollah, the Governor of the place; and Yezid despatched a body of troops against Hossein, under Abadoollah, one of his generals, who met the Imaum on his way to Cufa, accompanied by most of his family, and a handful of faithful adherents. A parley ensued, in which Hossein proposed one of the three following conditions: "That he should be allowed to return to Medina; or, that he should be stationed in a frontier garrison against the Turks; or be safely conducted to the presence of Yezid. But the commands of the Caliph or his lieutenant were stern and absolute; and Hossein was informed that he must either submit, as a captive and a criminal, to the commander of the faithful, or expect the consequences of his rebellion." "Do you think," replied he, "to terrify me with death?"—then, during the short respite of a night, he prepared, with calm and solemn resignation, to encounter his fate. He checked the lamentations of his sister Fatima, who deplored the impending ruin of his house. "Our trust," said Hossein, "is in God alone. All things, both in Heaven and earth, must perish, and return to their Creator. My brother, my father, my mother, were better than I; and every Mussulman has an example in the Prophet." He pressed his friends to consult their safety by a timely flight: they unanimously refused to desert or survive their beloved master; and their courage was fortified by a fervent prayer, and the assurance of Paradise. On the morning of the fatal day, he mounted on horseback, with his sword in one hand, and the Koran in the

other. His generous band of martyrs consisted only of thirty-two horse and forty foot; but their flanks and rear were secured by the tent-ropes, and by a deep trench, which they had filled with lighted faggots, according to the practice of the Arabs. The enemy advanced with reluctance; and one of their chiefs deserted, with thirty followers, to claim the partnership of inevitable death. In every close onset or single combat, the despair of the Fatimites was invincible; but the surrounding multitudes galled them from a distance with a cloud of arrows, and the horses and men were successively slain: a truce was allowed on both sides for the hour of prayer, and the battle at length expired by the death of the last of the companions of Hossein. Alone, weary, and wounded, he seated himself at the door of his tent. As he tasted a drop of water, he was pierced in the mouth by a dart; and his son and nephew, two beautiful youths, were killed in his arms. He lifted his hands to Heaven—they were full of blood—and he uttered a funeral prayer for the living and the dead. In a transport of despair his sister issued from the tent, and adjured the general of the Cufians, that he would not suffer Hossein to be murdered before his eyes. A tear trickled down his venerable beard; and the boldest of his soldiers fell back on every side, as the dying hero threw himself among them. The remorseless Shamer, a name detested by the faithful, reproached their cowardice, and the grandson of Mohamed was slain with three-and-thirty strokes of lances and swords. After they had trampled on his body, they

carried his head to the castle of Cufa; and the inhuman Obeidoollah struck him on the mouth with a cane. "Alas!" exclaimed an aged Mussulman, "on these lips have I seen the lips of the apostle of God!" Such is the eloquent relation of the death of Hossein, by the learned author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

The tomb of the Imaum, which is at Meshed-i-Hossein, a distance of about thirty miles from Cufa, has ever since been a place of pilgrimage to his Persian votaries. Those of his family taken at his death were brought in chains before Yezid, who generously dismissed them to join their relatives at Medina, though contrary to the wishes of his adherents, who advised the total extirpation of the family.

There is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous; and this mournful and affecting history has been so exaggerated by the Persians, that it loses, in the eyes of an European, all its pathos, and becomes absurd. The following is the account of the whole, as related to us by our host, Suleiman Khan, in the plenitude of his faith, and with the greatest seriousness, which, when stripped of the miraculous, closely adheres to the true story.

Hossein, when requested by the people of Cufa to become their Caliph, sent a certain man, "Moslem," to announce his intention of joining them; but the insurrection of the Cufians having been quelled by the Governor, the messenger is seized and ripped open. The Imaum, ignorant of this, starts for Cufa, with an army of thirty thousand men; and after a

painful journey across the desert, meets Hoor, one of Yezid's generals, with a body of eighteen thousand men, to oppose his further passage. When this leader comes in sight of Hossein's army, he suddenly determines to become his partisan, and he and his soldiers being very thirsty on account of the heat, request water to drink. Hossein gives the General and his army a copious draught from the water-bags, which confirms him in his previous resolution. This circumstance was stated as little less than a miracle, performed on behalf of the Imaum, though it would not seem very extraordinary, that the General preferred rather to join his opponent than to risk a battle with a force of eighteen thousand men, against an enemy with thirty thousand. Hoor now announces to his men his intention of joining Hossein, exhorting them to do likewise, but giving them leave to depart, if they wish it — which they do as fast as they can, to inform Yezid of the state of affairs. Meanwhile, Hossein continues his march, till, on approaching Kerbela, the horses stand still; all kinds of expedients are tried, but nothing will prevail on the beasts to go forward. Hossein then calls together his followers, and tells them that he feels it his fate to die there; and gives them the option of remaining with him, or retiring; but strongly recommends the latter. All, except seventy-two devotees, prefer living a little longer, please God! and, taking his advice, hasten back to Medina. The Imaum then harangues the remainder; and after a beautiful and interesting discourse on their approaching fate, as

some consolation, requests each man in his turn to look between his fore and middle fingers, which he holds up, where they see the particular spot allotted to them in Paradise, and feel greatly edified and encouraged thereby. The little band is now surrounded on all sides by many hundred thousands of the enemy, who advance to the attack. Hossein, with the wonderful sword of his father Allee, kills some thirty thousand; several others with him slay their fifteen and sixteen thousands; one of his sons, a lad of about seventeen, kills three hundred and fifty infidels; and the battle began to appear dubious, when the Almighty called to the Imaum from Heaven, and ordered him to stay his hand, saying, that if he did not desist, he would soon exterminate his opponents; that it was the Divine wish he should yield his life; and reminded him of a promise he had made to do so, when it might be required of him. Hossein acquiesces, and raising his arms to Heaven, rushes into the midst of his foes, who despatched him with one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine wounds. His son and companions were slain the moment he ceased to fight, and the rest of his family were taken captives by the conquerors, and conducted before Yezid, who afterwards sent them back to Medina.

Such is the Persian account we received, and the national vanity is strongly apparent throughout; not admitting for a moment, that their brave hero was otherwise overcome than by the Divine decree and his own consent.

During the month of Moharrem, this tragedy is

represented in the form of a drama, consisting of several parts or acts; one of which is performed each day by hired actors, whose pay is included in the expenses of the Takieh. The tenth and last day, called the Rooz-i-catle (day of massacre), concludes the whole, and comprises the immediate circumstances of Hossein's death.

The people had no scruples in our witnessing their representations, but, on the contrary, seemed rather pleased; and, at the request of the Khan, we saw the performances on the Rooz-i-catle, and another act which they here added to the tragedy, representing the return of the survivors of the Imaum's family when released by Yezid, which really exhibited some beautiful and touching parts; though, in general, to us Europeans, who could not enter into the excited and frenzied feelings of the multitude around, it was rather a ludicrous exhibition.

About twelve o'clock, we accompanied the Khan through the bazars to one of the takiehs, where kalleoons and sherbets were brought to us; while due notice of the Khan's approach was given at the Takieh, where the performance was to be held. In about a quarter of an hour, we moved on to another similar place, thus getting to our final destination by easy stages of six or seven hundred yards: here we drank coffee, and were entertained by the sight of some two or three hundred fanatics, rushing backwards and forwards, leaping about and yelling in a most terrific manner, brandishing clubs over their heads and firing pistols in the air; while two men were dodging about, beating immense cymbals till

they were black in the face, and only ceased when they fell down exhausted, on which everybody shouted Barikellah! Whether this was merely a burst of religious enthusiasm or intended to represent a battle, I could not, at the time, precisely understand, but I was told that it was the former. This part of the performance was very unpleasant, as the weather was warm and the odour exceedingly powerful. We then witnessed some clever feats of balancing with immensely heavy poles; and, after having listened patiently for half an hour to some poetry, of which we could not understand a syllable, it was notified that everything was prepared for the principal representation, and we forthwith adjourned to the upper gallery of a takieh, and waited for the commencement of the spectacle. It was altogether a curious sight; thousands of people were seated on the ground in front of the building, the men on one side and the women wrapped in their blue veils on the other. In the space between them was a wooden platform, which was occasionally used as a stage by the actors; altogether strongly reminding one of the description of the primitive plays performed in England some centuries back, called "Mysteries." The act of to-day, which I am about to describe, ought to have been the conclusion of the drama, as it represented the return of the Imaum's family to Medina after his death. However, this little anachronism was disregarded, as they preferred keeping the murdering till scene the last.

The actors were several boys and men, some dressed as women. The *dramatis personæ* were:

Zeineb, a sister of Hossein
Zechina, a daughter „
Zein-ul-Abudeen, a son „
} returned from Damascus.

Bechir, their guide.

Fatima, a daughter of Hossein
Umleilah, mother of the Hazret Abbas
} who remained at Medina, and are awaiting Hossein's return.

Abdoollah Jaffer, a brother-in-law of the Imaum.

A young son and daughter of the Hazret Abbas, under the care of Abdoollah Jaffer.

Mules, muleteers, servants, &c.

A carpet and a Persian bed, consisting of a mattress, pillow, and coverlet, having been laid on the platform, which was now intended to represent a chamber of the Imaum's house at Medina, Fatima, supposed to be unwell, gets into the bed, and Umleilah comes to visit her. After a quarter of an hour of recitative between them regarding Hossein's journey and his wished-for return, they remain quiet, and the scene is supposed to shift from the room to the streets of the town, where Bechir, in a suit of chain armour, makes his entry on horseback, leading after him the mourning family, Zein-ul-Abudeen, Zechina, and Zeineb, clothed in black and riding on mules. Their appearance caused a burst of frenzied grief from the spectators. Bechir assists them to dismount, and, wailing and beating their breasts, they endeavour to express their thanks to him for his kindness during their journey hither, deploring their destitute and miserable condition. They regret that they have no suitable present to

offer him (*groans and sighs from the multitude*); but, at the same time, beg him to accept some trifling tokens of their gratitude, and one gives him a shawl, another a coat, and Zein-ul-Abudeen, taking off his turban, insists on his receiving it.—(*Great sensation.*) Bechir is exceedingly affected at this, and turns away in a paroxysm of grief, reluctant to deprive the unfortunate family of the little they have left, and yet fearing to wound their feelings by refusing to accept their gifts. Abdoollah Jaffer, a venerable old man with a snowy beard, who till now had been quietly seated on one side with a little daughter and son of the Hazret Abbas, comes forward with tottering steps, leaning on a staff, and inquires what tidings they bring, and what has become of Hossein. They all embrace him, and relate the affecting history of the Imaum's death.—(*Immense sobbing and groaning.*) The poor old man appears completely overcome; and in a voice trembling and broken by emotion, pronounces a funeral oration on the virtues and excellence of the martyr, and laments his wretched fate.—(*Here the excitement was at the highest.*) The scene then turns again to Fatima and Umleilah. The latter seems to have had notice of Hossein's death; but the former grows impatient for his return. She says, that the time of his arrival must be near; and that, though ill, she will remain in bed no longer, but prepare to greet her beloved father. She rises, folds up the bed, lights candles, sweeps the apartment, and strews the floor with bouquets of flowers. Umleilah, meanwhile, is much distressed how to break the melan-

choly news to the fond and unsuspecting daughter. At length, however, she is relieved by the entrance of Bechir, who with many tears informs Fatima of her father's fate, at hearing which she gives one piercing shriek and falls senseless on the floor.—(*Groans and sobs, particularly from the women.*) When she is again restored to consciousness, in a low wailing tone she utters a few more sentences expressive of her misery and grief, and the performance is concluded.

The acting, in many parts, was very tolerable; the broken and distressed voice of Abdoollah Jaffer, and the grieved and distracted looks and gestures of Umleilah as she listened to the plans of the affectionate Fatima for greeting her father on his arrival, and pictured to herself the misery and disappointment the unexpected intelligence of his death would produce, were really well done: Fatima's part was also sustained with much spirit. All the performers held rolls of paper in their hands, from which they read their respective parts, and the absence of all scenery took away much of the interest of the representation. It was all sung in recitative.

The effect on the surrounding multitude was astonishing; from the oldest to the youngest, all sobbed and cried in the most piteous manner. A Mollah sitting near me shed most unfeigned tears, and carefully collecting them on a piece of cotton, squeezed them into a small bottle. The devout believe that, when enduring the torments of the lower world, one of these tears dropped on

their tongue will alleviate their sufferings for a thousand years. This custom calls to mind a passage in Psalm lvi. 8, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." Our host, however, might grill in Jehanum a long time without this relief; for, though his sobs and groans were of the loudest, beating his breast, and crying "Wahi! wahi! wahi!" all his attemps to squeeze out a tear proved ineffectual.

Thus have these extraordinary scenes of lamentation for Hossein's death continued to exist after a lapse of nearly twelve centuries, without the least abatement in the fervour and enthusiasm of his votaries. This practice, however, is disapproved of by some of the great and wiser Mollahs, who say rightly, that instead of honouring their Imaum, they murder him in effigy afresh every year; and that they make him a greater idol than the prophet Mohamed himself.

The sun was just setting as the performance concluded, and the Khan having made his namaz on the spot, we returned home together. At the corner of one of the streets, he pointed out to us the hollow trunk of an immense plane-tree, which had been roofed with tiles and turned into a shop, and is, I think, the greatest curiosity to be seen at Astrabad. There are many very large trees of this kind in different parts of the town, and there is a belief throughout these provinces, that when they have attained the age of a thousand years, they are subject to spontaneous combustion.

In the evening, about nine o'clock, the Khan

came to our apartment and invited us to see the people of the different mahals of the town exhibit themselves according to the custom of the season; so, wrapping ourselves in our cloaks, for the night was chilly and damp, we accompanied him to a small, open balla-khoneh (upper chamber), above the principal hall of audience, which overlooked the court-yard. First came a party of lads, each bearing a branch, to which pieces of lighted cotton, dipped in naphtha, were affixed; then came a party of men, half-naked, and armed with huge clubs and short spears; and after them a body of matchlock-men, who, having marched round the yard in solemn procession, all mingled together, and howling, screaming, rushing backwards and forwards, scattering the fire about, discharging their guns, and brandishing their sticks, created a scene of the most diabolical confusion and uproar. This having in some measure subsided, a large body of men, attended by numerous torch-bearers, marched forwards to a low, wailing chant, in which the words "Hossein," "Hassan," and "Peigumber" (prophet), were constantly repeated; all were furnished with two pieces of wood, which they clapped together at the same instant, keeping time with the singing, twice below and the third time high over their heads, leaping into the air; and the low, melancholy dirge, the startling, simultaneous clash, and the sudden springing up of the multitude, while the strong red glare of the torches fell on their wild figures and excited countenances, produced a

scene well worthy of Pandemonium. Then came a company of men, naked to the waist, some bleeding from self-inflicted gashes on the forehead; who, ranging themselves in a circle, began beating their breasts in the most violent manner, occasionally lashing their shoulders with a scourge of chains, which they handed to each other in turns, shouting at each blow, "Hassan! Hossein! Hassan! Hossein!" Heaven knows how long this might have lasted, for the blows became quicker, and the shouting louder, as the enthusiasm and excitement increased, had not the Khan exclaimed "Barikellah! Barikellah! Busest!" (Well done, well done, it is enough.) He then with his usual easy manner, addressed a most flowery and flattering speech to the kalenter (head magistrate) and the multitude, with which they seemed highly delighted, shouting at every pause, "Belli! Belli!" "Inshallah! Inshallah!" "Alhumdulillah!" &c. The people then departed, and we returned to our quarters, the Khan bidding us good night, with the assurance that we had more reason to rejoice for the good we had done our souls by coming to see this exhibition of piety (for so it was considered), than if we had been presented with a mountain of gold. A few evenings afterwards we were told that he, his sons, and chief attendants had mingled with the mob, and, bareheaded and unshod, were beating their breasts and using the chains with as much vigour as any one; thus, by these acts of fanaticism, believing that they obtained absolution for the numerous sins committed during the past year.

Most of the remainder of our stay at Astrabad was passed within doors. We had seen all that was worth seeing, and there was little inducement to extend our walks beyond the walls of the garden in which we lived. We also began to feel very unwell with severe pains in the chest, and had coughs, arising chiefly from the extreme dampness of the floor of our room, on which our mattresses were spread every night. The weather was rather changeable, being moist and warm in the day time, and chilly at night, and the thermometer, before breakfast, at about half-past eight, generally stood at 47° Fahrenheit. We had had no intention of remaining so long at Astrabad, but we could not find any muleteers who would start until after the Moharrem. On the twenty-eighth, however, a man was engaged to go on the first of February, to which day we looked forward with much pleasure.

Jan. 31st was the conclusion of the Moharrem, and we went to see the last act of the drama, the Rooz-i-catle. This has been described by Morier, as performed at Tehraun, and need not be repeated by me, as it was the same here in all its prominent features. The scene of the Imaum's leave-taking with the disconsolate members of his family, was really affecting and well-acted; but, as it appeared to produce an extra quantity of tears from the spectators, it was so often repeated for the good of their souls, that it became tedious. Only a sense, however, of the imminent danger of such a proceeding prevented me from indulging in a roar of laughter,

when an infant son of the Imaum was presented to him, to receive a last adieu,—the infant son being a wooden representation of a little man, with a great head, garnished with a most luxuriant pair of zulphs,* but minus the nose, which had been knocked off by previous ill usage. The whole length of the figure was about two feet and a half, and terminated in an excessively short pair of legs, very wide apart, both arms sticking out stiff at right angles from the body. Hossein has already mounted his horse, and, taking this ludicrous thing, is in the act of kissing it, when one of his enemies rides up, and stabs it in his arms. This produced such a burst of grief, that it was immediately acted over again. The enemies of the Imaum were all clothed in chain-armour, one suit of which was very valuable. It now belonged to Suleiman Khan; but had formerly been worn by a brother of Aga Mohamed Khan, Jaffer Kooly Khan, who was so treacherously murdered by that monarch. The whole performance concluded with the supposed burning of Kerbela, which was represented by setting fire to a few old tents, when the multitude quietly departed to their respective homes.

* Long locks which the Persians wear behind the ears.

CHAPTER XVII.

Take leave of Suleiman Khan.—Quit Astrabad.—Miaunderreh.—Continue our Journey.—Cross the Mountains.—The Megassee Caves. — Departure. — Sorver and Shahkoo. — Shemshir-bour Chehardeh. — Refuge Towers. — A Miraculous Spring. —Cheshmeh Allee.—Fortified Villages.—Ayanoo.—Deep-rooted Superstition.—Leave Ayanoo.—Toodervah.—Shebkess.—Auhoowan. Caravanserai.—Legend.—Sacrilege punished.—Old Ruin.

Feb. 1. ALL our effects having been packed up early in the morning, and the room once more reduced to its original nakedness, we sat down on the floor to take the last breakfast with our kind host. Whether his feelings were in unison with his protestations and appearance, I will not take upon me to say; but he affected to be, or really was, in low spirits, and expressed his regret at our departure. After the meal, he left the apartment, and sent us a handsome present of Toorcoman horses, and a general letter of recommendation to the ketkhodas of the villages within his jurisdiction through which we might pass, ordering provisions to be furnished, and every attention to be paid to us. Out of compliment to our host, we directed the animals to be saddled; and just before mounting, he presented himself, to make his last adieus: he embraced us, kissing each cheek in the Oriental manner, and hav-

ing wished us all prosperity, a life of a thousand years, and no diminution of shadow, retired to his anderoon, and we left Astrabad.

As far as Kafshigeeree we retraced the road by which we had arrived; then turning towards the mountains, and travelling through the forest about four miles further, we came to the village of Miaunderreh, distant sixteen miles from the city. It is prettily situated in a valley on the banks of a small stream, and belongs to the Sheik-ul-islam, at Astrabad. The houses are badly built, and the inhabitants subsist chiefly by cultivating rice. The tax on this grain is levied by the measurement of the ground. There is a measure of twelve lengths from the elbow to the middle-finger; and for a square of twenty of them, six khalwars, of one hundred mauns tabreez, are taken. A maun tabreez is about six pounds and a half English. The people say here, that to sow this space of ground twenty-six mauns tabreez are required, and that this yields twenty khalwars—seventy-seven fold. The ground is exceedingly good; and stable manure is occasionally employed. After the harvest is got in, rice sells for twelve kurrauns; but at this time it rises to about twenty kurrauns per khalwar. Sheltouk—that is, the rice in the husk—is only worth half the price. Cotton is also produced here. On all other produce except rice ten per cent. is levied.

The village of Miaunderreh contains about forty houses, and is divided into two parts, one nearer the foot of the hills than the other; to the latter we proceeded, and obtained very tolerable lodgings.

Feb. 2. The morning was bright and frosty; and, having already sent our baggage on an hour before us, we followed at nine o'clock. The road for about a mile from the village lay over wide, grassy lawns, on the slopes of the lower hills, from whence we had a good view of the desert, and the south-east corner of the Caspian, and anticipated a very magnificent prospect from the summit of the mountains. We soon entered the forest, which afforded some very fine specimens of its own peculiar scenery. We kept our way along the edge of a precipice nearly a hundred feet high, overhanging a ravine, at the bottom of which ran the ripling stream which passes Miaunderreh: on our left rose the steep side of a hill, thickly clothed with the wintry forest; and here and there fantastic masses of grey rock started forth from a verdant covering of creeping-plants, mosses, and primroses. An hour's travelling brought us down to the bed of the river, in which we continued our march for about a mile and a half, and then commenced an ascent, most painful and difficult to the horses. Hitherto the sharp frost of the morning had hardened the ground; but the sun was now high in the heavens, and having softened the frozen mud, rendered it very slippery; this, and the steepness of the path, made it all but impracticable. In many places we were compelled to dismount and lead our horses, which were dreadfully exhausted by the continual struggle. This lasted till we reached a level space, about four miles from the summit of the mountains, at a sufficient height above the sea for the snow to lie on the ground. Here we halted

for some minutes, to allow the tired animals to take a little breath. We had left our baggage far behind, making slow and laborious progress, as the cattle rolled over almost every instant, and the muleteers were incessantly engaged in replacing the fallen loads. On looking above us, high masses of rock, covered with snow, rose like an impassable barrier; and it was to me a matter of curious conjecture as to how and where we should pass it. Our guide, however, assured us, that as we proceeded the road would open upon us, and that we should soon reach the ridge. The intermediate path was difficult; and we were forced to walk the greater part of the way. Near the top there was half a foot of snow on the ground; and the icicles hung on the branches of the trees, among which I observed several firs. At last we attained the summit; and commenced a gradual descent by a broad, dry, and well-beaten road. The grand view of the Caspian and the lowlands, which we had expected to have enjoyed, was hidden by masses of white clouds, rolling several hundred feet below us.

The country as we proceeded presented a very different aspect to that which we had lately been traversing, for the hills were now half bare, merely dotted here and there with a few stunted firs. We soon got below the range of the snow, and continued the descent along a deep and narrow valley, till half-past three in the afternoon, when we arrived at some caves in the side of the mountain, where we intended to halt for the night. The hill in which these caves are excavated is of a clayey

nature, which has facilitated the work. There are several of them, of sufficient extent to accommodate some twenty or thirty horses. The place is called Megassee; a clear rivulet flows near at hand, and it is a convenient halting-place for muleteers between Miaunderreh and Chehardeh, being nearly equidistant from both. Several were at present resting here on their way to Astrabad from Damghaun, whence they were bringing salt: it is procured from the mines there, for about twopence-halfpenny a load, and sells at Astrabad for two shillings. It is only when they wish to return to Astrabad, and have nothing else to bring, that they load with this article.

After dark, our men, at the suggestion of one of the chavudars (muleteers), endeavoured to set fire to the wood on the side of the mountain, opposite the caves, for the sake of the sight; but they only partially succeeded, the trees being too green and damp to burn freely, and the night too calm to assist the conflagration. A tolerable blaze was, however, created, and the wild armed figures of our attendants, hacking at the branches with their drawn swords, and flitting to and fro with flaming brands, made a striking and romantic picture, as they were thrown out in strong relief by the light of the fire.

It was nine o'clock at night before the baggage arrived; the animals were worn out with fatigue, and the muleteers complained bitterly of the labour they and their beasts had undergone. More than

twelve hours had been spent on the road, accomplishing a distance of sixteen miles.

The thermometer this evening stood at 22° Fahrenheit, at half-past nine o'clock.

We found the caves rather cool during the night, but nevertheless we slept pretty comfortably; and in the morning, having got our baggage off long before the sun peeped over the tops of the hills, we ourselves followed at ten o'clock. The thermometer was 32° of Fahrenheit in the shade, when we left the caves. The hard, frosty ground was more pleasant to ride over than the swampy roads of Mauzunderoon, and the freshness and dryness of the air was particularly delightful after the close and damp atmosphere of the low country.

Having travelled about a mile, we turned east, over a level plain, where in summer the Governor of Astrabad encamps; a small stream of delicious water runs through it: no doubt it must be an agreeable and cool residence in the hot season. The surrounding scenery, however, is dreary in the extreme; the rocky, barren mountains rise in rugged confusion, and exhibit no sign of animal or vegetable life, save occasionally a flock of wild sheep, and here and there a solitary stunted pine-tree. Yesterday we had entered the district of Sorver: it is mountainous, and possesses only one village, named Rawkoa. The adjacent district of Shahkoo is of similar aspect, and can only boast of three or four hamlets.

About half a mile further we turned at a right angle into another plain, which gradually narrowed into a valley, and terminated in a steep, rocky pass. The road lay over this, and about three quarters of a mile on the other side we entered a curious defile, about three yards broad, the rocks rising on each side fifty or sixty feet perpendicularly, like immense walls. The chasm, called the Shemshir-bour (sword-cut), is said to have been effected by Allee with a blow of his wonderful sword. A small stream flows through it, which was now frozen into an undulating surface of ice, and none of the horses being roughshod, we had the greatest difficulty in getting through the pass. The whole length of the defile is not more than five or six hundred yards; but we were full twenty minutes in passing it. On emerging from it, we ascended

a gentle elevation, and entered a country perfectly barren, without so much as a bush, and the scenery formed a dreary contrast to the beautifully-wooded districts we had left behind. Continuing some miles further over low hills, we came to Chehardeh (four villages), which, as the name implies, consists of four separate villages, clustered together, and we once more beheld the long, formal walls, and flat-roofed dwellings of Upper Persia. However, though there was too much dust, there was no mud, which had hithertoo been our great grievance; and the place was not entirely destitute of foliage, as nearly every house possessed a garden planted with pears, apples, plums, cherries, peaches, and other common fruits. The names of the four villages composing Chehardeh, are Kaleh-ish, Zerdamox, Varasam, and Haraub-i-deh. The last is in ruins and uninhabited, having remained in this state since it was destroyed between sixty and seventy years ago by Zachi Khan, (a brother of Kurreem Khan Vekeel,) who, because he was opposed by the inhabitants, massacred them with his usual cruelty and erected a pillar of sculls on the spot. The other villages were devastated at the same time, but have since been gradually rebuilt, and at present there are about five hundred houses in all. Chehardeh is situated at the foot of some high rocky hills, and is between four or five fursucks distant from the caves of Megassee. The revenue is fifty tomauns in money, and forty khalwars of produce, and it is besides bound to furnish two hundred soldiers to the government.

Barley and wheat form the chief cultivation, which crops have, for the three last years, failed on account of drought, occasioned by a scarcity of snow in the winter, and the inhabitants have been obliged to bring grain from Astrabad. Some excellent bread, resembling biscuit, is made here.

We left Chehardeh at ten o'clock, and, passing a mud imaumzadeh of Mehmet (a son of the Imaum Jaffer-i-Saduk, uncle of the Imaum Hossein) which stands on the confines of the village, proceeded in a south-westerly direction across a well-cultivated plain. It was watered by several rivulets and everywhere dotted with the remains of small round-towers, in which those who happened to be employed in the fields took refuge in case of a sudden attack from the Khorassan Toorcomans, an event which was formerly of very frequent occurrence.

About three miles from the village we passed the ruins of a large, circular mud-fort, about fifty feet high, strengthened at intervals by round-towers; it was encircled by a ditch and low walls enclosing the remains of what were probably houses, stables, and gardens. The inhabitants of the country affirmed that it had existed from time immemorial, having been formerly a temple of the Guebres, but afterwards turned into a fortress as a protection from the Toorkomans. Their incursions, however, having entirely ceased for many years, the place has been allowed to fall to decay, and at present is an uninhabited ruin. We continued three or four miles further, in the same direction, and then left the road, turning west over some low, barren hills,

crusted with soda, for the purpose of witnessing a phenomenon, which had been mentioned to us wherever we had been. There is here a spring, into which if anything unclean be thrown, a few hours afterwards, or at farthest during the same day, the sky is said to become overcast, and a violent tempest of hail, rain, and wind to arise, which does not cease till the water has been cleared from the impurity. The prodigy had been personally witnessed by most of those who spoke of it. Suleiman Khan, at Astrabad, was perfectly convinced of its truth; and his head servant stated that one day when he happened to be there, his horse accidentally polluted the fountain, and a storm arose, such as he had never before experienced, and it was with the greatest difficulty he was able to reach a neighbouring village. Notwithstanding all we had heard so positively asserted, we felt sceptical, and determined to test the miracle ourselves.

The spring was situated about seven miles from Chebardeh, in a wild and desolate-looking spot, well chosen for the residence of the Spirit of the Storm; the volcanic rocks in the immediate vicinity were broken up into a thousand fantastic forms, and high on every side rose dreary, black-looking mountains utterly destitute of the least vegetation. The spring is called Ghendaub (foul water), and issues from a deep cut in the side of a small hillock; the water is of a dirty-yellowish hue, and intensely salt and bitter. To make the trial more fairly, we insisted on our guide casting into the water something unclean; for a long time he could not be

prevailed on, and earnestly entreated that no one would make so profane an attempt, protesting that we should bitterly repent our curiosity, and that, moreover, a storm just then would do great damage to the country. We, however, were inexorable; and having at last reluctantly thrown in some dung, he turned sorrowfully away, mounted his horse, and said not another word, evidently alarmed and astonished at our headstrong determination to satisfy our curiosity in spite of what he believed to be the certain and awful consequences. The day was beautiful, not a cloud was to be seen, and the weather could not have been more favourable for testing the miracle, which in this instance did not occur. Close to the spot is a small hut, then unoccupied, but where a guard generally resides to prevent people from defiling the water, or to clear it from any accidental pollution. It is difficult to account for such a strong and general belief, but it is not improbable that the occurrence of sudden storms among these mountains has given rise to the superstition.

We continued our march south, and reached Kellater, a village about three-quarters of a mile from the spring; then turning south-west, we entered a plain surrounded by rocky mountains, and having the appearance of an immense basin. Towards the south-east, signs of cultivation were visible; but by far the greater part was a waste, barely affording subsistence to a few flocks of sheep, which might be here and there discovered grazing, like small black specks on the dreary expanse. After cross-

ing the plain, we went over some low hills, and arrived at Cheshmeh Allee (fountain of Allee,) where we halted to see the springs. The water gushes out in abundance from several sources close to each other, falling into an artificial tank thirty-two yards long, and twenty-three broad, and six or seven feet deep in the middle. At the eastern extremity of this tank is a pleasure-house, having on each side two arches, through which the water flows into a lower and larger reservoir, about a hundred and seven yards long, and of the same breadth and depth as the smaller tank. At the eastern end of the larger reservoir is another summer-house. On either side of the water is a space closely planted with tall poplars; and a mud-wall, flanked by round-towers, surrounds the whole. The wall is in ruins, and serves at present only to prevent the inroads of cattle. The whole was built and arranged by Fathy Ali Shah, who was fond of sporting in this neighbourhood. At the south-west corner are a few huts, containing two families, who are in charge of the place to see that the trees are not cut down for fire-wood. These people are nominally paid by government ten tomauns a-year, but they complained that they never saw the money, and they live entirely by the cultivation of a little wheat, a garden, and the few presents they may chance to receive from visitors. The water is pellucid in the extreme, and the pebbles and weeds at the bottom are clearly distinguished. It makes its exit from the largest reservoir at the south-east angle, and, receiving seve-

ral additions from neighbouring rivulets, soon becomes a moderate-sized stream, which flows past Damghaun. A few hundred yards below, on the right bank of the brook, are some gardens, and a squre mud-fort, originally built as a protection to the fountain and summer-houses, but now merely serving as the residence of two or three families who cultivate gardens.

We left Cheshmeh Allee at three o'clock in the afternoon, and proceeding alternately over low hills and narrow plains, we passed Astanek, around which was a considerable extent of cultivated land. A few miles further we reached the village of Baba Hafiz, enclosed within four walls, with towers at the angles, and looking like a square fort. All the villages in Khorassan are either fortified with walls and towers, or have a kind of citadel in the centre, plainly indicating the former unsettled state of the country, and on almost every eminence are to be seen the ruins of fortresses and towers. Close to Baba Hafiz are the remains of the castle of Mehr-Nigaud, crowning the heights of an apparently inaccessible precipice. These are now, however, only reminiscences of by-gone times, as this unsettled state of things no longer exists, and the inhabitants live in comparative security.

Continuing onwards, we crossed the Cheshmeh Allee stream, and turning south, arrived at the village of Ayanoo, after a circuitous ride of five fursucks. Our baggage had long since arrived, having come the direct road, not more than three fursucks from Chehardeh.

Ayanoo is a small place about three fursucks from Damghaun, consisting of some thirty houses, and situated in a ravine. There are two large isolated towers standing near its entrance, but they have been allowed to fall to decay; and one of the white-beards of the place said, that there had been no chappows made here within his memory, which must have extended at least as far back as sixty years. The village is held in tweel by Mehmet Khan, the Shah's master of horse, who derives from it fifteen tomauns, which is the total revenue. It furnishes, besides, fourteen soldiers to the Damghaun regiment. The inhabitants cultivate a little wheat, and keep a few sheep and cattle, on which they subsist, seeming to have little or no intercourse with the rest of mankind.

During the night the weather remained lovely, and also the whole of the next day, in spite of the miraculous spring; but this apparent contradiction of the prevailing belief was readily explained by our Persian servants, who affirmed that the guide who had thrown in the dirt, and who quitted us at the village of Kellater, had immediately returned to the spring and taken it out again,—and their faith was perfectly unshaken, so difficult is it to remove the superstitions of ignorant people.

Feb. 5. We left Ayanoo early in the morning, and after travelling about two fursucks through solitary valleys among the mountains, came to a spring, from whence Damghaun and several surrounding villages were visible to the east, on the edge of a vast salt-plain, the commencement of

the desert of Khorassan. The water was very good, and having refreshed ourselves and horses, we continued our route in a general westerly direction, through the same desolate scenery of plains and mountains, without seeing a single village or human being, far or near, to relieve the dreary monotony. The country was perfectly clear of snow, and the burning sun, the brown soil, and scorched vegetation, gave one the idea of the close of autumn, rather than the middle of winter. There are plenty of wild sheep all along this road; in one place we gave chase to three of them, but they escaped to the rocks, and we were detained half an hour before we could recover our dogs.

After a fatiguing ride of seven fursucks, we arrived at Toodervah, situated in a long narrow valley. On seeking for lodgings, we were told that every house was infested with a venomous insect, called "shebkess," a kind of tic, which is found all over this part of Persia; and we were obliged to spend the night in an open shed belonging to a takieh used at the celebration of the Moharrem. Here we might rest, if not in comfort, at least in safety, by reason of the cold, from which it appears these vermin have a profound aversion. They seldom attack the villagers, but strangers are nearly sure to be bitten; and they say that the bite is so poisonous, as sometimes to occasion death. This insect is not the same as the Miauneh bug. Toodervah is one of three villages near each other which furnish two hundred soldiers to the Semnoon regiment in lieu of taxes. The names of the others are—Tooyeh, one fursuck

distant to the north-west, and Sahr to the south-east, a few hundred yards down the valley. They altogether contain about seven hundred houses. The inhabitants have no cultivation worth mentioning, as there is no suitable land and not water enough. They live by gardening, and produce plums, apples, pears, peaches, cherries, grapes, and apricots, which, when dried, they export to Mauzunderoon, and take rice, barley, wheat, and sugar in return; they possess, also, between seven and eight thousand head of sheep, subsisting on the numerous aromatic herbs found in these seeming deserts. We slept soundly, and did not suffer from cold. When we retired to rest at about ten o'clock, the thermometer was thirty-seven degrees of Fahrenheit; and when we rose shortly after the sun, it stood at the freezing-point.

Feb. 6th. We left Toodervah at nine o'clock, and a short and monotonous ride of twenty miles brought us to Auhoowan, at half-past two in the afternoon. The scenery was the same as that of the previous day, consisting of desert, plains, and mountains. We fell in with no villages; but in one place, some miles to the right of the road in the desert, we could just discern the walls and ruins of a few which had formerly been abandoned on account of the Toorcomans, and have never since been re-inhabited.

Auhoowan is merely a brick caravanserai, eighty yards square, measured outside the walls. It is said to have been one of the works of Shah Abbas; but as far as our meerza was able to decypher from a

carved stone above the doorway, it is only a hundred and sixty-three years old, the date being the 1097th year of the Hegira, and it is now the 1260th. It is situated in the midst of a small plain, and has lately been repaired by Mehmet Shah, who, we were told, intended to build a village round it. The interior of the building presents a square, open court, surrounded by a number of small arched cells for travellers, behind which is a long range of vaulted stables. This is the plan of all the caravanserais built by Shah Abbas. When we arrived, it was partly occupied by a caravan of camels, on their way into Khorassan, carrying alum and sugar.

Auhoowan is one of the chuppar stations on the road to Meshed; two or three horses are always in readiness, and the chuppargee keeps a small shop, where bread, corn, and other necessaries are sold.

The following tradition is told regarding the name of the place. The Imaum Reza happening one day to pass this way, met a hunter, who had just caught an auhoo, or wild sheep. The animal recognised the Imaum, which the huntsman did not; and, with tears in its eyes, intreated him to intercede, that she might be allowed to return to the desert for a young one she had left there. The Imaum spoke to the huntsman, who does not appear to have been at all astonished to hear the sheep speak; and who refused at first to let her go, as he shrewdly supposed that she would not return. However, on the saint offering himself as surety for her, he consented. In a short time the

auhoo returned with her young one; seeing which, the hunter fell at the feet of the Imaum, acknowledging the saint, and entreating pardon for having at first refused his request: since then the place has been called Auhoowan. The caravanserai has not been built on the exact spot where the scene described took place, as it is destitute of water: the real place is about three miles distant to the north, and is marked by a clump of trees standing in the surrounding desert, which a belief in the story has been the means of preserving from being cut down for fire-wood. It is a matter of firm faith with the people, that if a man break a branch from one of the trees, he is certain shortly afterwards to break his own sacrilegious arm. A story is related of a man who, a short time ago, cut down two of them, and having loaded his asses with them, came to the caravanserai, intending to depart early the next morning. At a late hour, however, his asses were still seen unladen in the court-yard; and, on going to his cell, he was found dead, having been bitten in the breast by a serpent. This story may be true as far as regards the man's death by the reptile, as there are many most deadly species of serpents in this part of the country; and nothing is more likely than that it might have got in amongst the loads of wood, or have concealed itself amongst the rubbish in the cell; but, of course, it was believed to be a special punishment for the impiety of destroying the sacred trees.

To the east of the caravanserai are the ruins of a somewhat similar building, said to have been

erected by Noorshirwan. It is a solid structure, built of stones and mortar, and the walls are in many parts nine feet thick. It is eighty yards square, and flanked by five round-towers on each side. Some of the cells in the caravanserai are still habitable. I looked in vain for any inscription which might indicate the date of its erection; but from the various coatings of plaster which are laid one over another in the gateway, it seems to have been often repaired, and bears every appearance of great age.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Leave Auhoowan.—Partridges.—Arrive at Semnoon.—Maimoon Khoneh.—Semnoon.—Legend.—Departure.—Wild Sheep.—Surkeh.—Lasghird.—Abdoollahbad.—Reach Dehnummuck.—Continue our Journey.—Khaur.—Destruction of the Grain Crops by Flies.—Kishlaugh.—Arrival at Eywanekaif.—Veramine.—Palesht.—Demawund.—Tehraun.—Rev. Dr. Wolff.

February 7th. On rising, we found the caravanserai deserted by the camel-drivers, who had departed before dawn, the time always preferred by caravans for starting in the East, and thus half the day's journey is generally performed before the intense heat of midday.

At nine o'clock, the thermometer was at 31° Fahrenheit, the weather was clear, and the sun shone brightly; there was no snow to be seen, save an occasional patch on the heights of the distant mountains, but a piercing wind was blowing, rendered doubly unpleasant by the clouds of dust which accompanied it.

We left Auhoowan at ten o'clock, journeying west, over the same description of country as that we had traversed for the last two days. About three miles on the road, we came upon a covey of red-legged partridges, which were singularly tame and would not rise, even though the dogs, in pur-

suing them, deprived them of large portions of their plumage. These partridges are found all over the north of Upper Persia in great abundance. There are, also, the common grey partridge, a small kind, called "tehoo," of a size between the quail and partridge, and also another very splendid species, much larger than a domestic fowl, called the kepk-i-derreh (partridge of the valley); they inhabit inaccessible rocks, and seldom allow themselves to be approached by the sportsman; they are, however, often taken when young.

Continuing our march, generally west, but sometimes winding round the bases of several excrescences at the foot of the mountains, we passed a ruined caravanserai, and came to a fountain, almost midway between Auhoowan and Semnoon, which, from the straw and litter scattered about, seemed to be a frequent halting-place for muleteers. From this fountain the road lay west, through a series of ravines formed by low hills, and finally brought us to the edge of an elevated slope, overlooking a vast plain, in the centre of which Semnoon was visible, apparently not more than six, but in reality fourteen, miles distant. The city had the appearance of the dark shadow of a cloud, and the road could be plainly traced far on the other side, till lost in the distance, which was bounded by a gentle rise, similar to the one on which we stood. The plain, till within a mile or two of the city, was desolate and barren, and the heat was excessive, even at this season, showing how unbearable it must be in the summer.

We arrived at Semnoon at four in the afternoon, and, making our way through its hot and dusty streets, came to a caravanserai, lately built by Saif-oollah Meerza, the governor, for the express accommodation of strangers, that they may be preserved from the bite of the shebkess, which infests all the old houses. This maimoon-khoneh, or guest-house, as it is called, is constructed on the same plan as Shah Abbas's caravanserais,—a square court, surrounded by cells for travellers, and a range of stables behind. We selected a room about five yards square, which appeared a palace in comparison with some of the wretched holes we had lately inhabited.

Our horses appeared very tired on arriving, and underwent the operation of shoeing, which had been so badly performed at Astrabad, that most of the animals had either cut their legs with the protruding nails, or had lost their shoes altogether. While this was being done, and our quarters being prepared, we availed ourselves of the remaining daylight to see something of the town.

Tradition says that it was built by two sons of Noah, Sin and Lam, whence it was called Sinlam, and afterwards, by a rather curious corruption, Semnoon. It is altogether about four miles in circumference, and is divided into five mahalehs within, and four without the walls, which are in a most dilapidated condition. It is said to contain between five and six thousand houses, built either of mud or of sun-dried bricks, and often fitted with baudgheers. It possesses ten caravanserais, and the ba-

zars are solidly constructed and pretty extensive, though narrow and badly stocked.

In the centre of the town there is a very handsome mosque, which was erected by Fathy Allee Shah. It consists of a large, square, paved court-yard, with a tank of water furnished with jets. The court-yard is surrounded by various apartments, and a medresseh is attached to it. In the centre of the east and west sides are lofty arches, forming the entrances to large domed chambers, used for devotional purposes, and most elaborately and beautifully adorned with lacquered tiles. To the north and west are similar archways, but smaller, through which the court-yard is entered from the streets. No objection was made to our seeing this place, which is the prettiest and most perfect thing of the kind I ever saw in Persia; and being new, it is in excellent repair.

There is another mosque not far distant from this, called the Mesjid-i-Jumah, which, among other inscriptions, bears one, stating its age to be two hundred and twenty-one years; but no one could tell me by whom it was constructed. It is in ruins; and seems never to have had pretensions to any beauty, save in a very elegant minaret about a hundred feet high, once embellished with coloured tiles, but now exhibiting nothing but the bare bricks. This I ascended, and obtained a capital bird's-eye view of the city. The line of bazars, with its succession of small domes, lay stretched beneath. I counted those of the principal bazar, amounting to a hundred and thirty-eight; and reckoning one shop

on each side of every dome, the number would be two hundred and seventy-six. There are, however, more in other parts of the town. The residence of the Governor, who was at this time absent on a hunting excursion, lies to the north-west, and is surrounded by walls, inclosing a variety of different buildings. His salary is two thousand tomauns per annum.

The revenue of the district, including the town and twelve villages, we were told, is about seven thousand tomauns; that of the town itself being four thousand six hundred tomauns.

A great deal of tumbeky is produced here, but of an inferior quality to that of Shirauz; the price of the best was twenty-five shahis (1*s.* 3*d.*), and of the lowest description six and three shahis per maun tabreez (6½ lbs). Kerbauz, a coarse, cotton fabric, is manufactured here, and is used chiefly for making tents, and for the curtains suspended before the open divankhanehs in hot weather.

Figs, grapes, and some other fruits are grown in the gardens; the former are small, but well-flavoured, and the grapes make excellent wine. These productions are sent to Tehraun and Mauzunderoon, whence returns are made in wheat, barley, and rice. I was told that the cultivation of the two former descriptions of grain around Semnoon only sufficed for three months' consumption; and that for the remaining nine it must be imported. There is no rice grown, as water is not plentiful enough.

To the north of the town near the hills, they

say there was formerly a city of Guebres, named Dzedjin, with which the following legend is connected.

When Semnoon was built, the water with which it was supplied flowed from the city of the Guebres, who, one day turned the stream and cut off the supplies. Sin and Lam seeing their town about to perish for want of water, repaired to Dzedjin, and entreated the chiefs of that place to allow the stream to return to its old channel: this they at first refused, but finally made an agreement, that on the payment of a sum equal to a thousand tomauns, the water should be allowed to flow into the city as long as life remained in the head of a fly, which was to be cut off and thrown into a basin of water. This was done; but to the utter astonishment of the Guebres, the head retained life during thirteen days; which so exasperated them against Sin and Lam, whom they now perceived to be men of God, that they sent an armed party to Semnoon to make them prisoners.

Meanwhile the sons of Noah had received intelligence of their designs, and fled. The first village they halted at was called Shah-derron, where having rested awhile, they continued their flight, strictly enjoining the inhabitants not to tell their pursuers the direction which they had taken. Shortly afterwards the Guebres arrived, and inquired where they had gone. The villagers did not mention the direction in words, but treacherously indicated it by turning their heads over their right shoulders, in which position they became immoveably fixed;

and since then all their descendants have been born with a twist in the neck, towards the right shoulder.

The fugitives next arrived at a place called Giorvenon, on quitting which they left the same injunctions as before. On the arrival of the pursuers, however, the people pointed out the direction of their flight by stretching their chins straightforward. An awful peal of thunder marked the divine displeasure, and the inhabitants of Giorvenon found themselves unable to bring their heads back to their proper position; and the curse likewise descended to their posterity, who have since been remarkable for long and projecting chins. After a long chase the Guebres overtook the prophets at the foot of a steep hill, up which they galloped into a small plain, where, to the astonishment and disappointment of their pursuers, the earth opened and closed over them. It was now evening, and the Guebres, placing a small heap of stones over the spot where the sons of Noah had disappeared, retired for the night. Early the next morning, the Guebres repaired thither with the intention of digging out the prophets; but to their confusion they found the whole plain covered with similar heaps of stones, so that all their endeavours to find the original pile were completely baffled, and they returned to Dzedjin disappointed. There is now a small mosque, said to cover the exact spot where Sin and Lam sank into the ground, which is called Seracheh, to which people resort to pray, and make vows; and close by, is an almost perpendicular rock, where, I was informed, are to be

seen the marks of the feet of the horses ridden by the Guebres.

Similar legends are told of nearly every old place, or curious rock, throughout this wild country; and however absurd or improbable, they are religiously believed by the greater part of the peasantry, and hardly doubted by the better informed. I was seriously told that one of the mahals of the town, called Koutch-megaun, is on the spot where Satan alighted when he fell from heaven, and that, consequently, the inhabitants are notorious for every species of vice.

We found our caravanserai very comfortable, and experienced no visitations of vermin. During the night, the cries of the jackals almost made me believe I was still in the low country.

Feb. 8. We left Semnoon at ten o'clock, and proceeded across the plain, in a westerly direction. At about a fursuck and a half from the town we descried Saif-oollah Meerza's party hunting in a distant part of the plain, and from the clouds of dust raised by the horsemen, and the frequent reports of fire-arms, they must have found abundance of game. Three wild sheep crossed our path, and we saw several more scampering in different directions. They are amazingly swift, and few dogs can come near them, unless they happen to be in a flock, when they press together and impede each other; in rocky and muddy ground also they are not difficult to catch. I believe them to be the species of "Ovis gmelii," or "Armenian sheep" of naturalists.

We met many horse and foot passengers going into the city, and numerous strings of asses laden with the dry plant of the gum tragacanth, which grows all over these plains, and is used for lighting fires, as it ignites immediately. Its value is about sixpence a load.

Fourteen miles from Semnoon we arrived at the village of Surkeh, where Saif-oollah Meerza had taken up his temporary abode. It is a large half-ruined place; the houses are built of mud, surrounded by gardens, beyond which is a considerable extent of cultivation. On the left of the road is an old mud-fortress, which has rather a picturesque appearance; on the right, the plain was covered with mounds like gigantic mole-hills, marking the course of numerous cannauts from the neighbouring mountains, and numbers of the small round-towers before mentioned were to be seen, standing as sentinels, as it were, over the fields.

Continuing our march some twelve miles further, we came to Lasghird, twenty-six miles from Semnoon.

Lasghird is a circular mud-fortress, and the most singular building I ever saw. The walls are very lofty and solid, and a little above half their height is a row of doors, like a ship's portholes, opening outwards on a projecting wooden platform; above these again, is another row of doors, midway between the first row and the top of the wall. The fortress is entered on the eastern side through a small aperture, which is closed by a huge stone revolving on a pivot. It contains about

a hundred houses, built one over the other, and connected by arched passages and flights of steps and ladders, in the most curious manner; and both its interior construction, and the continual buzz heard to proceed from it when at a little distance, reminds one of a bee-hive. The whole village, or community, is contained within the fort, which seems to have been formerly surrounded by a deep ditch, and must have been at all times perfectly impregnable to the Toorcomans, who have no idea of charging a wall, or standing to be shot at from a loop-hole. The inhabitants support themselves chiefly by gardening, and also raise a little wheat and barley. The revenue ought to be ninety khalwars of grain, and three hundred tomauns in money, but the inhabitants complained that seven hundred tomauns were usually levied from them. The gardeners pay in money, and the husbandmen in grain.

Lasghird is famous for its cheese, which is considered to be the best made in Persia; Persian cheeses, however, at best are very poor and dry, being generally extremely salt; but otherwise devoid of flavour. To the south-west of the fort is a caravanserai similar to that at Auhoowan, also attributed to Shah Abbas, in one of the vaulted chambers of which we established ourselves for the night. All these buildings are furnished with an aubambar, in front of the gates; but the water is often brackish here, though drinkable: it was rather bitter. To the south are the ruins of what was formerly either

a fort, or a caravanserai, but it is impossible to determine which, as nothing remains but part of the exterior walls.

Feb. 9. This morning was cloudy, and the weather seemed preparing for rain. At nine o'clock we took our departure from Lasghird, and crossing a wide plain, always keeping in a westerly direction, we arrived at Abdoollahbad twelve miles from our starting-place. We were now in Irauk, having about a fursuck before crossed a bridge over a deep narrow chasm, formed by a stream of water, which divides this province from Khorassan.

At Abdoollahbad are the walls of an old mud-fort, still standing, close to another of more modern construction, which had been latterly repaired by Mehmet Shah. At several of the post-stations along this road, where there is nothing but a deserted caravanserai, or old fort, as was the case here, men have been placed by government, and fifty tomauns have been given them to establish a shop for the sale of the provisions necessary for travellers and their horses. In some few instances where, from its position, the station is seldom used as a resting-place, and the owners of the shops cannot make a livelihood out of the traffic, a salary of twenty tomauns per annum is nominally granted by the Shah. The man, however, at this place complained that during the two years he had been here he had not received anything. He was perfectly alone, unless a large shaggy dog be called a companion; and a more

dreary life than he must lead, surrounded on all sides by a barren, stony desert, with only an occasional traveller to speak to, it is not easy to conceive.

From this place we crossed another immense plain, with slight undulations on its surface, at the further extremity of which our purposed halting-place was visible. About four miles from Abdoollahbad we passed a deep, narrow ravine, which our guide pointed out as having formerly been notorious for murders and robberies. A ruined and now deserted tower is perched on a small eminence just above it. After a hot and fatiguing ride of twenty-six miles, we came to Dehnummuck (salt village), where there is another of Shah Abbas's caravanserais, and a mud-fort, similar in plan to that of Lasghird, but neither so large nor so perfect, having, in fact, almost crumbled to pieces. It is now inhabited by only eight families, who have been placed there by order of the Shah. We had been told that the water here was not drinkable, but we found it as good as at most other stations.

Feb. 10. During the night a violent gale of wind blew, but towards morning it had considerably abated, and at ten o'clock our wearied horses were once more toiling over another interminable plain. At last we arrived at the fort or village of Pordeh, constructed also on the same plan as Lasghird; but being in ruins at its summit, it is more picturesque, though not so complete a specimen of the style. We now entered a division

of Irauk, called Khaur. It is well watered by numerous canals, cut from a stream, called Dellichai, and is exceedingly fertile, producing great quantities of wheat, barley, and a little rice and cotton. Unfortunately the grain-crops had been almost totally destroyed for the last two years by an insect, which the natives call "sin." They come from the north, in immense flights, about the middle of the spring, when the grain has attained about a foot in height, and having remained three days laying their eggs in the plants, disappear as suddenly as they came. About forty days afterwards the young ones come forth, and eat the inside of the ear, leaving only the husk. The parent flies then return, and remaining one night, assist their progeny to devour what may remain untouched, and then all depart together. Formerly, they used only to be seen in their flight to some other place, or perhaps a village only occasionally suffered from their devastations; but latterly, throughout the whole district, their visits have been so destructive that the people have not been able to pay the customary revenue. The rice and cotton crops had also partially failed, there having been for two successive seasons a great scarcity of water. The comparative prices of produce were :—

	Tomauns.					Tomauns.		
Wheat at present	3½	per	100	mauns	tabreez.	When cheap		1½
Barley	„ 2½	„	„	„		„	„	1
Rice	„ 5	„	„	„		„	„	4
Cotton	„ 4	„	„	„		„	„	3½

The revenue of the district of Khaur should be six thousand tomauns, and six thousand khalwars of grain.

Continuing onwards, we passed in succession the villages Kaleh-Haraubeh, Mehtabad, Alleeabad, and Aradon; this last was another of those curious mud-fortresses; but since security has been established, the people seem to have preferred a less confined residence, and have built houses among their gardens, leaving the fortress to fall gradually to decay. The remainder of our ride to Kishlaugh, through this well-cultivated and well-watered district, was pleasant from its contrast with the barren and desolate country we had lately traversed. We passed many flourishing villages in the distance.

Kishlaugh belongs to a person named Reza Hussein Khan, by whose father it was built. It contains between sixty and seventy houses, and pays a revenue of twenty per cent. on the produce of its cultivation, ten per cent. to the crown and ten per cent. to the owner, amounting to about forty tomauns in money and forty khalwars of grain to each.

Several villages were in sight from the terrace of our lodging; to the west Nodeh and Husseinabad, a mile distant; to the north, Karent, four miles off; to the east, Norsor and Shahboudeh, about two miles, and another village, also called Kishlaugh, eight miles off; and, to the south, Lorjan, a mile and a half distant.

We departed from Kishlaugh at ten o'clock, and, going a little north of west, travelled over a more

barren part of the plain for about two fursucks, when we entered a valley lying between low ranges of sandy hills. An intensely salt stream flowed through it, and the deposit on the edge was sometimes half an inch thick. Travelling about four miles through this valley, we passed the remains of an old fort, and entered an extensive plain, strongly impregnated with salt, and its eastern extremity totally uncultivated; two fursucks further brought us to Eywanekaif, twenty miles from Kishlauk.

Eywanekaif is held in tweel by Mehmet Khan, master of the horse, and, we were told, pays a revenue of three hundred tomauns and four hundred khalwars of produce. It has originally been contained within the four mud-walls of a large square fort, but now about two-thirds of the houses are outside them; altogether, there are about four hundred. The village is surrounded by extensive gardens and much cultivated land, and is famous for its figs.

On entering the plain in which Eywanekaif is situated, we had entered the district of Veramine, which, together with Khaur, supplies Tehraun with grain, and is both fertile and populous.

Leaving Eywanekaif, we reached Palesht, our last stage from the capital, after a hot and dreary ride of twenty-eight miles. At first, we had travelled over a barren plain along the skirts of the Elburz, and crossed several small rivulets flowing south, in which direction numerous fields and villages were to be seen in the distance. The last

eight miles had been through a well-cultivated country; and we now, for the first time since quitting the vicinity of Saree, beheld the peak of Demawund covered with snow; the mountain, however, appeared very insignificant, as it appeared from the high land on which we were, after having been viewed from the far lower level of the shores of the Caspian.

We obtained here tolerable quarters, as usual, in a mud-plastered room. I have not described any of our lodgings during the latter part of our journey, as, with the exception of the caravanserais, they were precisely the same as those between Tabreez and Ardebeel. Palesht is about four miles nearer Tehraun than Kabout-i-Goombuz (blue tower or dome), which is the first post-station on the Meshed road; the surrounding villages are, however, always preferred by muleteers, as the Kabout-i-Goombuz is nothing more than one of Shah Abbas's caravanserais, where no one resides but the person who has care of the chupper-horses placed there.

Feb. 13th. At ten o'clock we left Palesht, and rode along the foot of the mountains towards Tehraun. The city lies in the middle of a hollow plain, and was not visible till we ascended an intervening hill, and were within four miles of it. It presents nothing beautiful nor calculated to give one the idea of the capital of an empire; no gilded domes and sparkling minarets, but a small city, about the size of Semnoon, four miles in circumference, built of mud, and hardly to be distin-

guished in colour from the surrounding plain. We were now met by several gentlemen attached to the English mission, who were previously known to my friend, and, in about an hour afterwards, it was with no small delight that we found ourselves in an European house, with the comfortable assurance that we should take our breakfast the next morning without the pleasure of a hot ride of some twenty miles immediately afterwards.

In the evening, we dined with the British Chargé d'affaires, and were introduced to the Rev. Dr. Wolff, who was about to depart on the morrow for Bokhara. This singular man cannot fail to make an impression on all who have seen him; his extreme simplicity and utter ignorance of the ways of the world, left one in amazement as to how he could possibly have got thus far on the arduous and philanthropic journey he had undertaken, and which certainly, at first, suggested doubts as to the final accomplishment of a task from which many a younger, and apparently bolder, man would shrink. But, in fact, this very simplicity tends to ensure his success; the wild people among whom he goes have never seen his like before, so wrapped up in his own thoughts and speculations, and so totally regardless of self. Should he be asked for money, he would give it with a smile, and would almost express his gratitude. Besides, he is known among the Toorcoman tribes, and the sacred character with which they have invested him, considering him a man of God, added to his perfectly harmless and inoffensive behaviour, will prove his greatest pro-

tection, and will command for him assistance from all who have the power of rendering it.

The following morning he departed, with the sincere prayers of every one for his ultimate success; and we accompanied him several miles from Tehraun. He was habited in full canonicals, with an amazingly old battered white hat, and bestrode a mule, which, from his extreme timidity when mounted, he insisted on being led. The only attendants with him were his own servant and two gholaums, one sent by the Persian government, and the other by the British mission. They were to accompany him as far as Meshed, whence, after a little rest and some preparation, he intended proceeding with his own servant to Surekhs, where he would leave him, and continue his journey alone through each tribe with one of its members, which method, he said, he had formerly adopted with the most perfect security.

Dr. Wolff has been most kindly treated in Persia; he was furnished with all necessary papers and letters of recommendation by the Shah and his ministers, and travelled under no kind of apprehension for his own personal safety. With regard to the unfortunate prisoners, he neither desponded, nor was he too sanguine in his hopes; but from all he had been able to learn on the road, together with his previous knowledge of the manners and customs of the court of Bokhara, he thought that there was at least a great probability of their existence.

His arrival at Meshed, and subsequently at Bokhara, where his hopes were destroyed by the fact

then ascertained of the death of the captives, have been long since known; but up to the present time, his long detention at that place gives rise to a fear lest he should ultimately share the fate of his unfortunate friends.*

* This fear has happily proved to be unfounded.

CHAPTER XIX.

Description of Tehraun.— Race-course.—Ruins of Rhé.—Hadgee Meerza Aghassee. — Manner in which he became Vizier. — Anecdotes.—Meerza Abool Hassan Khan.—Mehmet Shah.

DURING my month's stay in Tehraun, most of the European residents were in ill health, which took away much from the pleasure of my visit; but my time was fully employed in making the acquaintance of Persians, and rambling about the town.

Tehraun is surrounded by a dry ditch, and, with the exception of a few shops outside some of the gates, is entirely contained within an embattled mud-wall, flanked by numerous round-towers in very tolerable repair.

The city cannot boast of any building of either beauty or antiquity: that of the greatest consequence is the citadel, which is fortified in the same manner as the town, and contains the palace of the Shah, and the houses of most of his court. It was originally built by Rerrim Khan Vekeel, and has been enlarged and embellished by succeeding monarchs. On passing the ditch and gate is a maidan (square), surrounded by barracks, and now occupied by six or seven hundred pieces of artillery. In the centre, on a raised platform, is an immense piece of

ordnance, which was cast by Kurreem Khan, and was formerly placed in an imaumzadeh called Shahee Tchiraugh, at Shirauz. It was afterwards brought here; and having, it is supposed, partaken of the sanctity of the spot from which it came, is respected as a sanctuary. The carriage is falling to pieces; and the Persians wish to make a new one, but dare not take the gun down, fearing that they should never be able to mount it again. Crossing this maidan, and going through a gateway ornamented with coloured tiles, one enters the royal establishment, consisting of numerous courts, gardens, and divankhanehs, both public and private. There are six or seven mosques at Tehraun, of which the principal is the Mesjid Shah, built, like that at Semnoon, by the late king; all the others are insignificant. There are said to be between a hundred and fifty and two hundred public baths, and a like number of caravanserais.

The city is divided into four parishes or mahalehs: the mahaleh Bazar, the mahaleh Tchai Maidan, the mahaleh Owd Larjan, and the mahaleh Ṣenghilek; and possesses five gates, named either after the districts into which they open, or from the places to which the road leads: thus, to the east, the Abdul Azzeem gate, leading to the district and village of that name, where is a mosque, built in honour of the Sheik Abdul Azzeem, a son of the seventh Imaum. The village is situated on the site and among the ruins of the ancient city of Rhé. To the north-east, Doulaub gate, leading to a village of that name, whence Tehraun is supplied with

vegetables of all kinds. To the north, Shimeroon gate, opening towards that district lying along the foot of the Elburz, and excessively fertile and populous; and Doulet gate (royal), leading direct to the palace, and generally used by the Shah. To the west, Casveen gate, leading to that city, on the high road to Tabreez.

These gates are well built, with domed entrances, ornamented with coloured bricks, inlaid in the shape of lions, tigers, and deeves or genii, and appear to be kept in good repair.

At the Sheik Abdul Azzeem gate, through which all caravans of merchandise are obliged to enter, no matter from what direction they may come, the custom-house is established, and the same dues levied both on entrance and departure.

The duty varies according to the nature of the goods: it is generally four kurrauns per load; but on some inferior articles, it is from one kurraun upwards.

The revenue of Tehraun (city) is 37,000 tomauns in money, of which the custom-house pays 13,000. That of the whole province of Irauk is 1,037,000 tomauns in money, besides about 108,000 khalwars of grain, straw, &c.

The bazars are built of brick, with vaulted roofs, and whenever the court is at Tehraun, present a lively and bustling appearance. The shops are well filled, and exhibit British and Russian goods, German glassware, hardware, and cloth, and the productions and manufactures of Persia. There is in the Georgian caravanserai a shop, which has lately been

fitted up in the European style, where every imaginable commodity is to be found.

From the bazars is a passage leading into a square court occupied by gunsmiths, who are skilful at their trade, and turn out very respectable weapons; but, as they find much difficulty in getting money for their articles, the number they manufacture is insignificant. Next to this yard is the cannon-foundry, which is one of the Prime Minister's hobbies, and is under his particular superintendence. I have been told that they make very good guns, but have no artillerymen to manage them when made.

Tehraun can scarcely be called a commercial town; though, where there is a court, there will always be a great consumption and a certain amount of trade. There is also a transit trade to all parts of Persia; but during my short stay I was not able to learn any particulars.

The population in general consists of between sixty and seventy thousand souls; but it fluctuates considerably, according to the absence or presence of the court.

The streets are not paved: in summer they are exceedingly dusty, and in wet weather almost impassable from the deep mud. The houses are built with sun-dried bricks, in the same style as is used throughout the whole of Upper Persia.

The appearance of the country around the city is at this season very dreary and desolate, being stony and barren. To the north is the Cusr-i-Kudjer, a summer-house built by Fathy Ali Shah. On a raised platform of earth, supported by terraces gradually

rising in succession, and at the foot of the elevation, is a garden: it was generally tenanted during the summer by the royal harem; but the place was found so unhealthy, that for the last two years it has been shut up, and is rapidly falling into decay. About eight miles from the city, in the same direction, at the foot of the mountains, are the yeilauks, where the British and Russian missions and most of the richer inhabitants retire in the summer, when the heat in the city is suffocating, and the air almost pestiferous.

To the north-west the Shah has lately made a race-course, enclosed by walls, and furnished with a small building for his own accommodation, which may be called the Grand Stand. The races generally take place about the Norooz; and, as I left Tehraun before that time, I was not able to witness the manner in which they are now conducted. I frequently saw the horses in training, mounted by their jockeys, boys between eight and ten years old. There were races at Tehraun for many years before this course was laid out. The race used to be continued for about twelve miles; and, when it was nearly completed, some fresh horses belonging to the Shah, which were concealed behind a wall built for the purpose, joined the rest—and, of course, won the race.

In a south-easterly direction, about five miles off, are the ruins of Rhé, which have been noticed by all travellers who have visited Tehraun; and I can only say with Fraser, "Never, perhaps, were ruins with less to satisfy the appetite of the antiquary!

Nothing is seen but heaps of potsherds and rubbish, well dug over, and excavated for all the fire-burnt bricks they might contain." Sir John Macdonald also says, "They offer nothing worthy of observation." There are, however, still to be traced, along an offshoot from the Elburz, the remains of walls and towers; and among the rubbish below stands a curious circular tower of about fifty feet high, and a hundred and twenty feet in circumference outside the walls, which are arranged in twenty-four triangular compartments, each of about five feet in width. Encircling the summit is an inscription in the Cufic character; the interior is empty, and devoid of ornament. At the top, on the north side, it is partly broken down, and there is the appearance of a narrow staircase in the thickness of the wall; but I could see nothing more than that it was hollow, and could find no entrance to it. I fancied that the earth flooring returned a hollow sound as I walked across it. There are two or three towers in the vicinity, but I only saw them at a distance.

On the 21st we paid our respects to Hadgee Meerza Aghassee, the Prime Minister. We found him in his divan-khaneh, surrounded by people, who, at the moment we were announced, were all unceremoniously turned out, except Meerza Abool Hassan Khan, formerly Ambassador to England, and now Minister for Foreign Affairs, who, being the Hadgee's colleague, was seated on the same nummud. The room was a very handsome one; the walls and ceiling being beautifully painted in flowers, women's

heads, and other devices, and the windows being of coloured glass.

The Hadgee received us very politely, and commenced a most extraordinary conversation, sometimes on one topic and sometimes on another; in the same breath asking questions, and answering them himself: and, before we had been there five minutes, he gave us clearly to understand, that, in his own estimation, the world had seldom seen a man equal to Hadgee Meerza Aghassee. "Who was Bonaparte?" he exclaimed; "he could have made him walk round his little finger. And Aflatoon (Plato) and Aristotle—whose dogs were they? They might have been wise—it was likely they were; but he was not altogether an ass!" ("Asterfarallah! —God forbid!" muttered his companion.) And then shoving his cap on one side of his head, with an air of immense satisfaction, he dashed off to quite another subject, and, without a moment's pause, enquired "What kind of fortress are the Russians building at Arshourada?"

We endeavoured to persuade him that no such thing was intended, but he did not appear convinced of it. He spoke with no great favour of the Russians; and, having asked many questions regarding their occupation of the above-mentioned island, said, that the Persian Government had no wish that they should remain there. On it being remarked that they were the guests of Persia, that they had been invited to come there, and therefore ought to be better treated, he denied having given any invitation, and enquired, "What is your

idea of a guest? This is mine:—You come, unattended, to see me; you make your bow. I say, 'Khosh aumedeed! you are welcome; take a seat, take a seat.' I call for kalleoons, order tea, coffee, sweetmeats,—in short, everything you can wish for. I call that being my guest. But, supposing you come to see me, with a fellow behind you pointing a bayonet at my breast, I say 'Khosh aumedeed!' I tell you to be seated; I show you, apparently, the same attention as before; but I conceive the case to be very different. Had your mission come here while a squadron of your ships of war pointed their guns on Bunder Busheer, you would have been somewhat the same kind of guest as the Russians:—guests indeed!" and then again, instantaneously changing the conversation, he began enumerating the improvements he had lately made about Tehraun; and soon after we took leave.

The Hadgee resembles a Toorcoman in features, with his long wrinkled face and scanty beard. He is a spare man, has a very peculiar expression of countenance, and I should have rather supposed him to have been some harmless lunatic than the Prime Minister of Persia. His history is rather singular.

He was one of the meerzas, or scribes, of the Armenian patriarch at Erioon, and is said to be very learned and well read in Persian literature. Abbas Meerza wanting a tutor for his sons, the Hadgee was recommended and engaged, with a salary of fifty or sixty tomauns per annum; he

educated all the princes, and prophesied to each that he should one day wear the crown of Persia. In one case, of course, he was right; and, on Abbas Meerza's death, Mahomed Meerza was named, by Fathy Ali Shah, his heir, and succeeded to the throne of his grandfather. The Hadgee used to say that he was the most stupid of the sons of Abbas Meerza, and that teaching him was like driving a nail into a stone block.

Soon after the accession of the new King, the Hadgee went to Tehraun to remind him of his services and his prophecy, with a view to obtain a pension; and he was then so poor, that he was obliged to pawn a gun, a sword, and some other articles, to pay the expenses of his journey.

He was favoured with an interview with his old pupil, and, having received an imperial order for a pension of five hundred tomauns a-year, he retired to get the paper sealed by Meerza Abdul Kossim, the Vizier, or Kaimakan, as he was called. The affixing of the seal was put off, on one pretence or another, from day to day; and the Hadgee, seeing that his firmaun was likely to undergo the fate of many others, again went before the Shah. "What manner of King are you?" said the Hadgee; "it is true you gave me a firmaun, but your Minister will not seal it, and it is useless—take back the paper! Is it thus you treat your oldest and most faithful servant?" "Stay," said the Shah, reddening with anger; "wait a moment, Hadgee: we shall see whether I am the Shah of Persia or not." The same hour, or very soon

afterwards, the Kaimakan was summoned to the royal presence. He came, as usual, without suspicion of what had occurred. The King looked fiercely at him, and commenced a long list of complaints: "I have now been on the throne nearly six months — my army is not paid — nothing is attended to; my commands are slighted — everything goes wrong; and, by the head of the Shah! when I give firmauns to my old and faithful servants, they are thrown aside as so much waste-paper. Wallah! Billah! Is it not so? Is my beard to be laughed at in this fashion? Seize him,—seize him!" The feroshes rushed on their prey, and, before he was well out of the presence, not a rag remained on his back. He was much hated at court; all therefore, treated him as a disgraced Minister having no friend, cuffing and kicking him to their hearts' content. He was afterwards conveyed to a small garden outside the town, near the Doulet-gate, where he was strangled.

No one expected that the Hadgee would ever rise to the post of Prime Minister; but he managed to be constantly near the King, gained his confidence and became necessary to his comfort, and gradually and quietly slipped into the place, which he has occupied ever since. He is now in fact the actual monarch, as almost all business about the court is done by him. He sometimes says to the King, "As I am your sacrifice, what does your Majesty know about the matter? Let the Shah attend to his pleasures, and leave business to me."

The Kaimakan was strangled in the spring of

1835: the immediate cause of his death was, no doubt, the Hadgee's firmaun; but he was much disliked and distrusted by the King, whom he used constantly to control in a thousand trifling ways. The Shah, for instance, would call in his jellowdar, and order out horses to take a ride; but, before the man could reach the door, the Minister would say, "May it please the Kibleh-aulum, (point of the world's adoration,) but it is going to rain; your Majesty had better not ride to-day;" and turning to the grooms, "There is no occasion for the horses." He knew the King to be a weak man, and relied too much on the influence he supposed himself to have obtained over him. I was told, that after his death two chests full of unsigned berauts (orders on the treasury) were found, all of which were, of course, charged as paid in the Government accounts.

Many people believe the Hadgee to be really insane, while others say, his eccentricity is more feigned than real. Stories of the most childish absurdity are related of him. While the army was encamped before Heraut, he would frequently enquire if the town had yet surrendered. The reply being in the negative, he would burst into most furious invectives against Kamraun Shah. "May the graves of his ancestors be defiled!" he exclaimed: "whose dog is he, that he thus presumes to oppose me? But I will have mercy no longer; tell Sheer-i-Mohamed (the chief executioner) to come here." The Nasackchi Bashi was introduced, and the Hadgee ordered him to take

some stout feroshes, and instantly bring him the head of the Prince. "Becheshm," said the executioner; and he went very quietly back to his quarters. As soon as he had left the audience hall, the whole assembly would entreat the Hadgee to be merciful. "Spare his life; remember he has children; Aga, he has a wife; it is a pity to put him to death;" and at length, after much persuasion and entreaty, the farce would be concluded by the order being countermanded. This may appear almost incredible, the absurdity is so great; as every man amongst them knew right well that Kamraun Shah was snug in his own palace, and as much out of the Hadgee's power as the Hadgee was out of his.

But, with all this absurdity and eccentricity, the Hadgee is a clever man; he has managed to keep his place for nearly ten years, and is now in as high favour as ever: this alone would prove it. The way in which he managed the Persians on the first excitement of the late affair at Kerbela, showed, at least, a thorough knowledge of the people with whom he had to deal. He said to the European elchees (ambassadors), when they were preaching moderation and peace, "Now you must leave all to me; take no notice of what I say or do, and upon my head be it that all shall end as you wish." They did so; and the Hadgee every day, at his levee, was abusing the Osmanloos, and, to the delight of the surrounding and excited mob, described graphically how they should cut them in pieces, and the insults that should be heaped on their mothers,

wives, daughters, and their whole generation. He issued orders in the arsenal for the preparation of cannon and ammunition; one regiment was sent in this direction, another in that; toofenkchees were drilled, and then disbanded; gholaums, who had packets with nothing in them, were despatched hither and thither almost hourly: all was bustle, and, to the eyes of the admiring people, everything had the appearance of immense and active preparation; while, in reality, with the exception of the marching and countermarching of several bodies of men, nothing whatever was done. The apparent preparation delighted the Persians; but, as the Hadgee expected, the immediate excitement passed away, and they soon got tired of it: whereas, had he attempted to check it on the first outbreak, the consequences might have been serious.

Feridoon Meerza, one of the Shah's half-brothers, was named Governor of Shirauz. His retinue was chiefly composed of natives of Azerbeijan, who ill-treated the inhabitants, plundering them, insulting them, and committing all kinds of excess, till at last they rose *en masse*, besieged him in his palace, and, had it not been for a regiment which had been drilled by British officers, and some artillery, who remained faithful to him, he would have been taken, and probably put to death. The Shah heard of the state of things, and immediately despatched Meerza Nebbee Khan to examine into and quell the disturbance; and Feridoon Meerza was politely requested to make the best of his way back to Tehraun. All this had been kept a pro-

found secret from the Hadgee, who happened to entertain a particular affection for Feridoon Meerza, and always considered him the cleverest of the sons of Abbas Meerza. However, the rumour of the affair at last reached his ears, and, making his way into the King's tent, (he being then encamped near Tehraun,) the Hadgee abruptly began, "Ah! so it is thus you treat Feridoon Meerza? There!" (dashing his cap on the floor,) "take my office; I remain no longer:" and he precipitately left the tent. "Vai! vai! vai!" exclaimed the astonished Shah. "Hadgee, come back! capugee bashi (door-keeper), stop him! bring him back!" and the Hadgee was at last pacified; the King requesting to be informed why he should wish to retain the crown, if he lost his faithful Minister.

Another time, very lately, the Sheghaughee regiment at Tehraun, wanting pay, came to the house of the Hadgee, who began to abuse them; they retorted, and commenced an assault on the house, so that he was forced to comply with their demands. He then remained at home in great anger for six or eight days, when finding that the Shah did not take any notice of him, and never sent for him, he thought he might be carrying things too far, and left his house for the royal residence. About midway, however, he met his Majesty coming to pay him a visit; and dismounting, kissed his hand. "Where are you going, Hadgee?" asked the King. "To the arsenal," replied he, not wishing his real intention to be known; and seeing, at a glance, that his Majesty had been rather anxious about his non-

appearance, and wanted to make things smooth again. "But I am going to pay you a visit, Hadgee." "Bismillah," said the Minister; and they returned together to his own house, when in a few minutes Hadgee regained all his influence and became as great a favourite as ever; the Shah praying that he might not reign ten days after he had lost his faithful servant; and the Hadgee, in rejoinder, hoping that ten years might be taken from his own life and added to that of his Sovereign.

The scenes that sometimes take place at the Hadgee's hall of audience are highly amusing. Business in the East is transacted in a manner altogether different from the European practice. The Minister almost every day sits in public, when berauts, petitions, complaints, and firmauns are presented to him. His room is generally crowded to excess, and each person presses forward and holds out his paper, while all are shouting at the same time, "Ili janum, Agha! look at this,"—"Only a moment,"—"Sign this,"—"Read this,"—till at last the Hadgee, nearly smothered, and completely puzzled, bawls out, "Ho, ferosh, ferosh! turn out these dogs' sons; they are killing me." One of the feroshes is a perfect Hercules; and I have heard it described as most laughable to see him, on these occasions, seize some unfortunate individual and thrust him through the door-way into the passage. A rush then takes place in order to avoid similar treatment, and the whole assembly scramble or tumble head over heels into the court below.

Every one in Persia laughs at the Vizier; but he

is, perhaps, as much liked as it is possible for a man in his situation to be. He is humane, and often interferes in behalf of those whom he thinks suffer harsh treatment at the hands of the King. One great secret of his popularity is, that he makes a point of never refusing anything. A man, for instance, asks for a pension—the Hadgee grants it in the most gracious and flattering manner, and perhaps immediately gives a Government order for the sum on Bahman Meerza at Tabreez. The applicant goes away delighted, while the Hadgee secretly writes to the Prince not to pay the order. Subsequently the man finds his beraut useless; but this does not altogether efface the impression originally given of the Hadgee's kindness; and the applicant feels much comforted by the idea that the pension has positively been granted to him, and that, though he does not get it, he has a right to it.

The Minister has done some good on a small scale in the vicinity of Tehraun. He has built several villages, and has been lately cutting a canal from the river Keredge to Tehraun, where the water is scarce and bad. He lately went there to inspect the works; and, on arriving, was accosted by an Isphahaunee donkey-driver, who had long been employed in the work, but received no pay. "Hai, Aga," said he, throwing himself before the Hadgee's horse; "I have been long working here, but I get no wages. I and my asses are starving; do not allow me to be thus treated!" "Dog of an Isphahaunee!" said the Minister; "who are you? What dirt are you eating? Go and die—what more is an

Isphahaunee fit for?—go, go!" The attendants seized the man, forced him aside, and the party proceeded. The donkey-driver, however, piqued at his abuse as an Isphahaunee, was not thus to be intimidated, and again throwing himself before the Hadgee cried out, "Aga, Aga, listen to me; it is true I am an Isphahaunee, and only fit to die. I am content; but my donkeys, Aga, my donkeys are all Toorks, must they starve too?" The Hadgee is of a Toork tribe, and the laugh which this witticism raised was the means of obtaining for the donkey-driver his just demand.

Numerous are the stories and anecdotes told of this eccentric man; some undoubtedly true, though many are pure fictions, as every one in Persia exercises his talents in raising a laugh at his expense. But enough of the Hadgee, who, to say the least of him, is the greatest curiosity at Tehraun.

On the 23rd we visited Meerza Abool Hassan Khan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who, as I before mentioned, was formerly Ambassador to England. He is a fat jolly old fellow, always laughing, and still speaks a little of his broken English. He said, he should very much like to go back again were he not too old. The room in which we were received was one of his private apartments, very nicely fitted up in somewhat of an European style. As he seemed to have business on hand, our visit was soon concluded.

During my stay at Tehraun, I went out coursing several times, but always without success. There was formerly a great deal of game in the immediate

vicinity of the town, but now there is none within several fursucks.

On the 4th of March, I was presented to the Shah. We rode to the citadel, and, dismounting at the entrance, walked through several courts, in one of which we met Meerza Abool Hassan Khan in his court-dress, which consisted of a shawl round his head, and a red cloth cloak, with stockings of the same colour: he conducted us to the private room where the King was to receive us. It was not large; and the walls, of plain white plaster, were stained and dirty: they were hung round with various prints of Napoleon, Prince Albert and Queen Victoria, and some others, of which the value might have been sixpence each; there were also several small circular portraits in plaster of Paris of the heads of the different Kings and distinguished personages of Europe. When we entered, the Shah was sitting opposite the door on his couch, dressed in a shawl-coat, an under-garment of dark green calico buttoned up to the throat with gilt buttons, a shawl round his waist, shalwars or wide trowsers of the blue cotton manufacture of Persia, and a common lambskin cap. He looked excessively ill-tempered, without the slightest dignity in his manner, and in my eyes appeared altogether a very ordinary personage. On his left was a large or-molu clock of curious workmanship, presented to him by Sir John Campbell; and a small Russian table and two or three chairs were all the moveables. Our visit was short, and little was said; and I returned home, I confess, much disappointed. The Shah suffers

severely from gout, which it is not unlikely will shortly put an end to his existence. He has no taste for display, and no magnificence is kept up at court. He scarcely ever appears in his regalia. At the Nerooz, when it has always been the custom of the kings of Persia to clothe themselves with all possible splendour, he shows himself in a red coat with epaulettes and embroidery of pearls, which highly disgusts the Persians, who say that it is neither an European costume nor their own, and that he looks more like a "fesoul" (tom-fool) than anything else. He never goes in summer to encamp at Sultanieh with his court and army, as was Fathy Ali Shah's custom; but generally pitches his tents during the hot season somewhere in the vicinity of Tehraun, and amuses himself with hunting.

CHAPTER XX.

Leave Tehraun.—Chuppar Ride to Tabreez.—Bahman Meerza.—Tabreez.—Ruins.—Manner of supplying the Town with Water.—Bazars.—Trade.—Gardens.—Norooz.—Leave Persia.

On the 4th of March a chuppar, arriving from Tabreez, brought me letters which determined me to hasten thither; and on the 8th I left Tehraun with a Gholaum of the mission, Reza Kooly Beg, the bearer of despatches to the former place.

Several of my friends accompanied me about a fursuck on my way, when, having bidden adieu to them and the kind companion of my journey to Tehraun, I mounted my horse and soon lost sight of the city. The road lay over a bare, stony plain, dotted here and there with lines of mounds indicating the canauts used for irrigation. Having travelled two fursucks from the town, we passed a small rivulet called Kend, which derives its name from a village situated near its source. From this point the country was perfectly barren, until, having rounded a portion of one of the mountains, we came again on a little cultivation; and leaving the village of Tchellek, perched on the side of the hills, on the right, we crossed the river Keredge over a picturesque bridge, and entered the village of the

same name just at sunset, having ridden twenty-four miles. The chuppar khoneh here is in the remains of one of Shah Abbas's old caravanserais, where having made a hasty dinner, in about ten minutes I ordered out the animals, and we proceeded on our way. Keredge is a fine village. The Shah has here a shooting-house, where he sometimes makes a short stay. There are plenty of partridges, wild sheep, hares, and antelopes in the vicinity. The gardens are well stocked with fruit-trees, and the surrounding district produces barley, wheat, lentils, and cotton.

From this place we got two horses, one of which I rode, and the other the Gholaum appropriated; and two asses for my baggage and the Suridgee, or guide. We had not the prospect of a very pleasant or quick ride; the night being cold and dark, and the road stony. We had thirty-six miles to travel to Sefer Khodjeh, the next menzil: our horses seemed wretched brutes, and could hardly put one leg before the other; the asses being by far the more serviceable animals. We had hardly got a mile from Keredge when we met Allayah Beg Gholaum, who travelled with me from Erzeroom some five months before. He was bringing despatches from thence, and complained sadly of the horses along the road; he had been eight hours from Sefer Khodjeh, and could not make his horse go faster than a walk: after a couple of minutes' conversation we continued our respective routes. The moon rose about ten o'clock, and in some places, the road being good, by dint

of whipping and spurring we managed to get up a sort of trot; but it was not till near morning that we arrived at Sefer Khodjeh. I ordered fresh horses immediately, and before sunrise we were again on our way to Casveen, a distance of twenty-eight miles. Close to Sefer Khodjeh is the village of Kishlauk, and there is a considerable extent of cultivation on every side. After travelling two or three miles, we crossed a stream which had deposited a thick layer of salt on each bank, and entered a barren, stony plain. There had been a slight frost during the night, and a thin coating of ice lay along the edges of the streams we passed, which were all salt, with the exception of one running along a deep artificial channel to some cultivated land at a distance. This is the only drinkable water between Sefer Khodjeh and Casveen, and nearly the whole road lies over a barren plain, the desolate aspect of which is heightened by the frequent remains of deserted villages.

On approaching the city of Casveen, we entered a tolerably well cultivated tract of country. Nothing is seen of the town till one is close to it, being concealed by the gardens which surround it for some two miles on every side. It is defended by walls and towers, and appears of considerable extent. The bazars, through which I rode, are large and well supplied, and were filled with people. There were two conspicuous mosques; one, called the Mesjid-i-Shah, built by Fathy Ali Shah; and another, of much older date, distinguished by a large dome and two minarets of glazed blue

bricks, which are now partially destroyed. The dome was also formerly decorated in a similar manner, but all the tiles had fallen. The chuppar khoneh at Casveen is in a ruined medressah, which, with the old mosque last alluded to, is built like the works of the age of Shah Abbas. I had ordered horses immediately on arriving, and, after an unusually short delay, started for Siah-Dahen, a distance of twenty-four miles. Casveen is not naturally well supplied with water, and has therefore many fine aubambars; these, when full, I was told, contain water sufficient for two years' consumption. I passed one of them in leaving the town; it was handsomely decorated with glazed bricks, and fitted up with baudgheers, to assist in keeping the water cool. It was built by one Hadgee Agha, a seller of pottery, who, having amassed a sum of money, dedicated it at his death to this work of charity.

We had, for this stage, really capital horses, and the road was beautifully level and free from stones. We passed several villages surrounded by patches of cultivation, though by far the greater part of the way was, as usual, desert, here and there dotted with long lines of canauts, conducting water into the more fertile plains below. About a fursuck from Siah-Dahen, we came to the village of Dahek; here the road resembled a fine gravel walk, and we rode into Siah-Dahen at a gallop.

On arriving, it was just dark; and we started again, almost immediately, for Khorrum-derreh, a thirty-two mile stage. Our cattle could scarcely

move; I never saw such wretched animals: and the fatigue of riding a horse during a long, dark, and cold night, when one has not slept for thirty-six hours previously, is only to be conceived by those who have experienced it. We had not got four miles from Siah-Dahen, when one of the horses refused to proceed, and we were obliged to leave it at a small village, which happened to be close at hand, named Kishlaugh, and continued our journey with the remaining three, one poor brute having to sustain the weight of my baggage, as well as of the Suridgee, who soon after was forced to get off and walk the remainder of the stage. During the whole night we did not move faster than a foot's pace, and a more tedious ride I never experienced. It was morning before we reached Khorrum-derreh, and though I felt sleepy, yet, as we had been so very slow in coming, and I wished to get on, I ordered horses to be prepared immediately, and we continued our journey to Sultanieh, twenty-four miles further.

Khorrum-derreh is situated in a valley, through which runs a small river, fertilizing the surrounding country. Wherever there is water in Persia, the land is productive and well cultivated; but this valuable element is sadly deficient throughout the land. Around the village, on all sides, were fruit-gardens and fields already green with the young barley.

We left Khorrum-derreh with three horses and an ass, and again had the greatest difficulty in getting along; whip and spur were applied in vain,

now and then a jog-trot was all we could accomplish. The road lay along the left side of the valley for about eight miles, when the mountains on each side receded, and the wide plains of Sultanieh opened on our view. Four miles after leaving our last halting-place, we passed the village of Hiveh; and four miles further, at the extremity of the valley, that of Saïn Kaleh. After entering the plain, no more cultivation is to be seen until arriving at Sultanieh; all is one dreary and uninhabited expanse, only made use of for feeding sheep, several flocks of which were scattered about in different directions. Some snow was lying here and there in the corners of the ditches, the first I had seen on the road. Sultanieh is not seen until within four miles of the place, being situated rather low. The mosque, containing the tomb of Sultan Mohamed Khodabundeh, forms a very conspicuous object, and rises high above the ruined huts with which it is surrounded. It was originally ornamented with glazed tiles, but they have now almost all fallen off. The tomb is a large octangular building, surmounted by a dome, with a minaret at each angle, most of which are half broken down. The chuppar khoneh is situated close by the ruin. I had fresh horses prepared as soon as possible, wishing to reach Zenjon before dark; and, a quarter of an hour after our arrival, we were again in the saddle.

The chuppargees, all along the road, complained sadly of the manner in which they receive their pay, or rather in which it is withheld. Two hun-

dred tomauns a-year are allowed by Government, with a certain quantity of barley and straw, to each chuppar khoneh, and they are expected to keep seven or eight horses always in readiness. The money is paid at Tehraun to Meerza Sheffee Khan, the chuppargee bashee, who, after a long delay, pays about one hundred and twenty tomauns to each chuppargee, keeping the remainder for himself. The number of Persian, Russian, and British chuppars continually going this road* is great, and consequently the poor beasts have scarcely come in from one long journey than they are saddled for another; and it is not unusual, on arriving at a station, to find all the horses out. On the right hand, on leaving Sultanieh, is a place built by Fathy Ali Shah on a small elevation, where he used to reside when his army was encamped on these plains during the summer.

For many miles after quitting Sultanieh, we traversed over barren wastes, until, when about half-way to Zenjon, we entered a well-watered and fertile valley. The horses were again most miserable; and it was barbarous work, pressing the poor jaded beasts.

It was dark when we entered Zenjon, and I could see but little of the place; though, from the streets we passed through, and the outline of the town against the sky, it appeared to be of considerable extent. This place is considered half-way between Tehraun and Tabreez. We

* See Appendix (F.)

were delayed about twenty minutes, while the horses were being prepared, and then we resumed our journey. Passing through rows of bazars dimly lighted at long intervals by naphtha lamps, but in most places pitch-dark, we at length emerged near one of the gates of the town, which was not opened to us till after a quarter of an hour's parley with the porter. The night was dark and cold, and the road stony and uneven. We walked at a slow pace for some miles, when I began to feel so cold and sleepy that I was continually on the point of falling from my horse, only saving myself by a violent effort and a start. I cannot adequately describe the harassing effect of this feeling, during the night, on a chuppar journey. The gholaums, from long habit, sleep perfectly well, and manage to keep their balance, swaying backwards and forwards without falling or starting, and they have told me that they always felt refreshed. Reza Beg, the man who was now with me, slept both night and day, for hours together, on horseback, when the cattle were in a walk. It was lucky he could do so, as he did not otherwise obtain a moment's sleep, except on one afternoon, during the whole ride. I could not sleep in the saddle; but, the moment we came to a station, I threw myself on the ground, and, after ordering horses, slept soundly for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, which very much refreshed me.

To return to our journey: feeling in a state of torpor, and my eyelids being still so heavy that

when open I had no power to keep them so, I awoke with another start, and determined, notwithstanding the dark night and the stony road, to gallop onwards, in order to rouse myself. I awakened the Gholaum, who was fast asleep, and whose dim outline I could just distinguish before me, making a variety of low bows down to his saddle-bow, and told him to spur on. He expostulated, and said it was impossible, and that the cattle would come down if we attempted to go faster; however, I was too tired to listen to reason, and riding forwards ordered him to follow me. Away we went at a smart canter; and some violent plunges, which my horse made among the loose stones, served to keep me on the alert. But we had not gone above forty yards, when, hearing a crash behind, and pulling up, we saw the Gholaum and his horse rolling on the ground. I called to him, but he gave me no answer; and, though the horse rose, the man lay motionless.

I shall not easily forget the feeling that shot through me at this moment; perhaps he had broken his neck, and my rashness had been the cause of it! I had scarcely dismounted, however, when, to my great relief, he rose, and staggered up to his horse. I found he was only stunned; and, after a few minutes, he was perfectly recovered, and we proceeded onwards: but we gave up all attempts at a gallop until the moon rose, and my alarm had completely banished drowsiness. We crossed during the night three rivers; and, having passed a small village called Hirch, arrived at Baugh, situated among the

low hills over which we had latterly been travelling. The dawn just appeared as we entered this village, having been the whole night coming twenty-four miles. This was very annoying to me, as I much wished to get on: so I determined not to rest unless we made better progress; and, ordering out the horses, we were again on the road half an hour before sunrise.

The morning was very cold, and the wind blew a perfect hurricane: the first part of the road, however, though hilly, was smooth and good; and the horses being rather better than usual, we got over this stage more quickly, and reached Aukend, twenty-four miles from Baugh, about eleven o'clock. Just before we arrived there, however, our beasts were completely knocked up; the Gholaum's horse refused to move, and the Suridgee was obliged to dismount and walk, driving his own before him.

Not feeling tired, I determined to push on, and proceeded to order the horses, when, to my utter disappointment, there was not one in the stables; all having been lent in the morning to the villagers to ride out to meet the Governor of the district, who was on his way hither. There was no help for it; so we went to sleep, and waited patiently till their return, which was not till near sunset, and then the beasts were tired. They were saddled, however, with all speed; and, finding the road good, we made the most of the remaining daylight.

About two fursucks from Miauneh we crossed the Kizzil Ouzen by an old bridge, of which I could only distinguish the outlines, and perceive

that the pavement was in a wretched state of dilapidation; and we then commenced the ascent of the Kaufilan Koh, the only mountain-pass on the whole road. The ascent did not occupy much more than three quarters of an hour, and the path was good and broad. On descending, we crossed on the other side the Miauneh river over a long bridge, and shortly afterwards arrived at the town. There is a much shorter way from Zenjon to Miauneh than the one we had travelled, and which is generally adopted by caravans; but the chuppar khonehs are not placed along the line, as in summer the villages are deserted, the inhabitants leaving them, to escape the necessity of supplying the numerous troops and travellers who are always passing during that season. The distance from Aukend to Miauneh is twenty-four miles, and we arrived here at midnight.

This town is noted for a particular kind of bug, the bite of which is exceedingly poisonous, and sometimes fatal. I have heard the effect described as being the same as that occasioned by a powerful dose of laudanum; the sufferer lying for days together in a state of drowsiness, but not experiencing any pain. The native antidote is to wrap the patient in the raw hide of a newly-slaughtered cow.

The horses having been quickly prepared, in a quarter of an hour we were *en route* for Toorcoman Chaï. The road lay over an uneven country; the night was dark, as the moon did not rise till near morning; the horses were tired and bad, and our progress consequently was slow. We arrived at Toorcoman Chaï, twenty-eight miles from our last

station, about half an hour after sunrise. The village is a large one, situated on either side of a small stream; the fields were already green, and numerous parties of labourers were sallying forth with their ploughs and buffaloes.

I did not remain here more than a quarter of an hour, and we again continued our journey to Tickmetash. Just after leaving Toorcoman Chaï we met a large caravan, conveying dead bodies to Meshed, each mule bearing two coffins. Our horses were very tolerable, but part of the road was very wet from the melting of large patches of snow, which were here scattered all over the country. Tickmetash is twenty-four miles from Toorcoman Chai, and we arrived a little after midday. We delayed here as short a time as possible, and mounted for Seid-Abad, the last station before Tabreez. The horses were very good, and the road tolerable, lying over a succession of small plains and intervening hills. We reached Seid-Abad, twenty-four miles from Tickmetash, a little before sunset, and were obliged to remain there during the greater part of the night, as the gates of Tabreez would be closed, and there was no advantage in arriving there before morning. At about half-past two, therefore, we started with excellent horses, and galloped nearly the whole way into Tabreez, sixteen miles, where we arrived with the first dawn. A tremendous wind was blowing, so that we could hardly sit on our horses. Delighted to have finished my journey, I hastened to the British Consulate, where I was very kindly received by the Consul-General; and, in

a few hours, felt perfectly recovered from all my fatigues.

The first few days of my stay at Tabreez were occupied in receiving and paying visits. On the 10th of March I paid my respects to his Royal Highness the Governor Bahman Meerza. We were met near the entrance of the palace by the Beglerbeg, by whom we were conducted through several square courtyards to a moderate-sized apartment, prettily painted, where we found the Prince, seated in a large arm-chair, behind a table covered with numerous papers and materials for writing. In person he is short, rather inclining to corpulency; but his face is handsome, and a sparkling dark eye gives an intelligent and dignified, and at the same time pleasing, expression to his countenance. He was richly habited in cashmere shawls, and a diamond-hilted dagger glittered at his waist.

Chairs were placed for us, and the Prince kindly inquired after his friend Mr. A., and hoped he had experienced every attention from the authorities while in Azerbijan; he also asked several questions regarding the climate and productions of Mauzunderoon and Gheelaun, and appeared highly amused at the idea of the Asterabadee selling his uncle for eight kurrauns. After a little more conversation of the same kind, we took leave.

The present Shah, and Caraman Meerza and Bahman Meerza, are sons of Abbas Meerza by the same mother. Caraman Meerza died miserably at Tabreez in the autumn of 1841, through excessive drinking. When he arrived as Governor some few

years before, he was a fine, active, intelligent young man; but, giving way to his propensity for strong liquors, he gradually lost every faculty he possessed, and expired in an apoplectic fit. He was succeeded in his government by Bahman Meerza, entirely through the influence of his mother, much to the annoyance of the Hadgee, who has a great aversion to him, as indeed to all the members of the Royal Family, whom he supposes it his interest to keep as much as possible from places of power, lest gaining too much influence they might interfere with his own. The Shah's mother is, however, all-powerful with her son, who regards her with great veneration, and who insisted on her favourite, Bahman Meerza, being appointed to the post. As a Governor, he is generally liked by the people; he is not cruel, though firm in punishing offenders. He asks advice from no one, but conducts the administration of affairs entirely himself. His memory is extraordinary; for, when examining with his Meerzas the papers of payments due to the troops, or other accounts, as is his custom, he will sometimes astonish them by the accuracy of his recollection and quickness in detecting any mistake: as, for instance, in calling over the names of the men in a regiment who have to receive pay, he will suddenly stop them, saying,—That man received his pay at such a time and for such a reason; if you refer to such and such a document, you will see an entry of it. They do so, and generally find him correct.

He is excessively fond of show and display in jewelry, and buys up all the precious stones he can

obtain; though, I believe, as much with a view to a safe investment of his money as for the gratification of his vanity. In a country like Persia, even a Prince of his rank and near relationship to the Shah might easily be placed in a position to render flight necessary to his safety; and, in such an emergency, jewelry would be the only property sufficiently portable to carry with him. His greatest failing, and that which I have heard most complained of, is his love of hoarding money, and his parsimonious disposition. This is an unpardonable sin in a Governor among the Persians; for, though every one of them has a strong affection for the precious metal, they cannot endure it in a great person holding a lucrative Government employment, whom, on the contrary, they expect to be open-handed and generous. This dislike is, however, more confined to the higher classes; as, from the Prince's custom of transacting all business himself, the lower orders apply directly to him, thereby depriving the Khans and great people about him of the bribes and presents they would require, did affairs pass through their hands. The poor man is benefited by this plan, as he has only to pay once, namely, to the Prince. There is no doubt, however, as to his good government, which is mild and comparatively free from extortion; and, though remote districts frequently suffer from the rapacious and oppressive conduct of the petty governors under him, yet on the whole the people are happy and prosperous.

March 20th.—Since my arrival, the weather had been snowy and unexpectedly severe, and I was con-

sequently much confined to the house. In the intervals of sunshine, however, I amused myself with riding about the suburbs, or strolling through the bazars, which always presented an enlivening and busy scene.

Tabreez is situated on an elevated slope at the eastern extremity of a wide plain, bounded on the south-west by the waters of the lake Shahee, and on the other sides surrounded with barren ranges of red sandstone mountains. Near the town, and along the foot of the hills, are several flourishing villages; and the land, being irrigated by numerous rivulets, is rendered fertile: but the greater part of the plain is devoid of water, and is of a barren and sandy soil, so strongly impregnated with salt as to be almost incapable of cultivation.

The city is visible, on the Erzeroom road, from the village of Shebister, a distance of thirty-six miles; and its extensive suburbs and gardens give it, from thence, the appearance of a dark patch of forest, or the shadow of a cloud.

Popular tradition reports that Zobeide (known to all readers of the "Arabian Nights" as the favourite wife of the Caliph Haroun-al-Reshid), suffering from fever, recovered her health on this spot; and, admiring the salubrity of the climate, founded, or most likely only rebuilt, a city which she called Tabreez, from the two Persian words—*Teb* fever, and *Reekten*, to scatter or disperse. This was in the 165th year of the Hegira, or about the middle of the eighth century of the Christian era; but its origin and ancient name have been much disputed by dif-

ferent authors. The greater part of Tabreez, however, as it now stands, is of modern date, it having been frequently destroyed and rebuilt; and even within the last two centuries it has been twice laid low by earthquakes. On this account, and from the perishable nature of the materials used in building in this country, and which have probably been the same from the most remote periods, little of interest and nothing of any great antiquity remains.

The most interesting ruin is that of an old mosque just outside the walls, near the Tehraun gate, said by some to have been built by Jehan Shah, one of the descendants of Tamerlane. It was destroyed by the last earthquake, but the remains exhibit some beautiful specimens of mosaic in lacquered bricks, and also some very fine slabs of what is called Tabreez marble, a petrescent deposit from a spring near Maraugha. Sir John Chardin describes a similar building, "the inside of which is inlayed, or rather pargeted, with transparent marble, and all the outside variegated in mosaic work," which he attributes to the Turks when they held Azerbijan; and adds, "The Persians account the place defiled, because it was built by the Turks, whose faith they abominate." He does not note its situation; if, however, this be the mosque alluded to, its origin must have been forgotten, as it is respected as much as any other ruined religious edifice, care being taken that the marble slabs are not removed: within its precincts the people lay out dead bodies to dry. The same

author mentions a mosque as "the fairest in all Tauris, all the inside and some part of the outside being gilt with gold. It was built in the year 878 of the Hegira by a Persian king, called Geoncha, or king of the world." The interpretation of the king's name shows what it is meant for, or it would be difficult to recognize Jehan Shah in the quaint spelling of "Geoncha." I know, however, of no similar building at present, the mosque now ascribed by the Persians to Jehan Shah answering exactly to the description of that which Sir John Chardin has attributed to the Turks.

Besides this is the citadel, which is supposed to have been the mosque of Ali Shah, of which nothing now remains but a large square tower, built of brick, about one hundred feet high, the most prominent object in Tabreez when approaching the city. It is now turned into an arsenal, and was used as a place of execution, criminals being thrown from the summit. A short time ago, however, a woman, who was to be executed for adultery, contrived to arrange her clothes in such a manner, that the wind inflating them broke the force of her fall, and wafted her unhurt into a neighbouring garden, since which time the practice has been discontinued.

The city is surrounded by a double wall and ditch, both becoming more dilapidated every day, without any attempt being made to repair them. It is four miles in circumference, and is divided into eight parishes, each of which has a gate of the same name.

Without the walls are extensive suburbs, containing perhaps as large a population as that within them. Calculating from a census taken some ten years ago, this is considered now to amount altogether to about one hundred and twenty thousand souls. There are between fifty and sixty caravanserais, and eight or ten medressehs. The streets are generally narrow, and always unpleasant; in dry weather, from the quantity of dust; and in wet, from the deep argillaceous soil. Water is scarce, and the supply of the different parts of the town is in the hands of private individuals, who at their own expense have constructed aqueducts, from springs at some distance, for the supply of the town. They sell it for about two tomauns per annum per "looleh," or stream of about the thickness of a man's finger, which the buyer opens from the main channel when he has occasion for it. He may purchase as many "loolehs" as he likes, and regulate the size of his pipe accordingly. It is difficult, however, to say what is the average payment for water, as it depends on a multitude of circumstances,—the dryness of the season, the quantity required, and the agreement with the owner. The value has of late years been continually increasing. Each buyer obtains his supply from the side of the main stream, and, if payment is in any case withheld, the water is cut off from the whole street, much to the inconvenience and annoyance of those who do pay; though this seldom happens, as it is every man's interest not only to be punctual himself, but also to see that

his neighbour is so. It is, however, a never-failing source of dispute, each party endeavouring to defraud the other as much as possible.

The bazars are about the same size as those of Tehraun, but neither so well built nor so regular. Adjoining them are two fine caravanserais; one constructed by Hadgi Seid Hussein, a merchant; and another by his son-in-law, Hadgee Sheik Cossim; a third is in process of building by the former: there is also another not far distant, the Fathy Allee Beg caravanserai, which is tenanted by Georgian merchants, and usually called the Georgian caravanserai. These are the best in the city.

Tabreez is the emporium from which Persia is supplied with European goods. The returns are made partly in specie, and partly in produce and native manufactures.

From Isphahaun, tobacco and dyed calicoes are sent.

From Shirauz, tobacco and khennah.

From Yezd, dyed calicoes and other manufactures.

From Tehraun, specie.

From Resht, silk.

From Mauzunderoon, rice and a little sugar.

From Kurdistan, gall-nuts and furs (fox and otter).

From Khorassan, carpets and pipesticks.

From Oroomia, tobacco.

From Kerman, shawls.

And also dried fruits from all parts of Persia.

Of these various articles, large quantities are exported to Georgia, and also to Constantinople; a considerable portion being in transit for Europe. The import trade in European goods has increased considerably during late years; but, there now being a greater supply and more competition than formerly, it is by no means so profitable, either to the importer or native purchaser. It is difficult to state accurately the amount of British goods annually imported, as opinions and accounts vary materially,—those from Trebizond making it about 30,000 packages, and those derived from the custom-house and other sources at Tabreez only giving about half that number. As there is no reason, however, to doubt the accuracy of the statement from Trebizond, where the number of packages brought by each vessel for Persia is carefully noted, and where no one has any object in giving a false account, I should be inclined to give it more credit than that from Tabreez, where the custom-house officers, and almost every source from whence the information is obtained, are interested in lessening the apparent amount. The customs are farmed, and, did the grand customer allow the amount of goods passing through to appear such as to leave him a large profit, he would be outbidden by a competitor the following year, and therefore takes care to make out his returns in such a manner as to show little or no balance in his favour. Some portion of the packages forwarded to Persia from Trebizond certainly never reach Tabreez, but are consumed at Khoï, and

perhaps smuggled into Georgia, but by no means a sufficient quantity to account for a deficit of one-half. Besides British manufactures, a small quantity of German goods are included in this number of packages, chiefly broadcloth, English cloth being too expensive; also some tea, sugar, glass, hardware, and earthenware.

In proportion as the trade in British goods has increased, that in native manufactures has fallen off. Formerly a large quantity of prints were manufactured in the vicinity of Tabreez and other parts of Persia, the designs being executed both on cloth of the country and English calicoes brought for the purpose; but, nearly all these designs having been imitated in England, the Persians can now get a cheaper article than they can make themselves. The native prints and dyed calicoes, however, continue to be manufactured, in a more limited quantity, for the supply of the Georgian market, where the importation of British goods is strictly prohibited by the Russian Government.

The dyed native calico from Isphahaun and Yezd is more durable, though dearer, than the English manufacture. There are now established at Tabreez three Greek commercial houses, and they will, ere long, be probably followed by others. They are gradually driving the Persian merchant from the trade, as he, purchasing his goods at Constantinople, finds it difficult to compete with those who import directly from England the choicest assortments bought by their partners in Manchester on the most favourable terms in every

respect. The Georgians also, who formerly imported a large quantity of goods from Germany, have been obliged to retire, in consequence of their heavy losses; and their business does not probably now exceed five hundred packages annually: thus it is expected that the Greeks will soon monopolise the whole trade.

Owing to its commerce, and the extreme healthiness of the climate, Tabreez is now the most flourishing town in Persia, and is yearly increasing in size. The value of land for building within the walls, which was formerly at 70 tomauns per maun (or measure of 1250 square yards), has risen to 100 tomauns. That outside for gardens, where there is water, sells for from 8 to 10 tomauns near the walls, where it is dearest; and the ground for building costs from 4 tomauns to 15 kerrauns, according to its situation.

The suburbs and gardens extend some miles round the city; and in the spring, the latter, appearing like one sheet of blossoms, have a most refreshing appearance. They produce almonds, apricots, apples, pears, peaches, grapes, and some other fruits.

For two years past, the almond crops have failed; and this year the trees were in full blossom, when the cold and severe weather destroyed them, to the great misery and disappointment of many unfortunate families, whose sole dependence for support is on the crop. It is considered a good investment of money at Tabreez to buy a garden, into which the purchaser sends gardeners in the spring to prune

the vines and other trees, and put the place in order; and then sells the expected produce for a certain sum, leaving the trouble of gathering and the chance of failure to the buyer. In general, it answers well for both parties; the owner getting a high per-centage for the capital invested in it, and the buyer making a good profit on the fruit.

March 19th.—The feast of Norooz was now at hand: the bazars were becoming deserted; already several shops were closed, and every one was preparing to enjoy the holiday. Norooz is from two Persian words, "noo," and "rooz," (new day); and the feast is held on the 21st of March, which the Persians consider their new-year's day. It is a festival of a date long prior to the Mohamedan era; and is said to have originated from the day that Jemsheed entered Persepolis. The Persians believe that Jemsheed was one of eighty persons who were with Noah in the ark.

All salaries are paid, and accounts dated from the Norooz. It is an universal feast; and during a week or ten days the bazars are closed, and the time is spent in merriment and visiting. At this season the Governors of the different provinces are either removed or confirmed in their situations; and the numerous presents which are sent to the Shah to secure favour, form one of the most productive branches of his revenue. Fraser estimates it at 1,200,000 tomauns. The King sends his servants with khalaats, or dresses of honour, to most of the khans about the court, who, in return, handsomely reward the bearers. Similar gifts, shawls, or sweet-

meats, are given by the different Governors to their dependants, and also by masters to their servants. A full description of the usages on this occasion is to be found in Mr. Morier's "Travels in Persia in 1808 and 1809."

On the morning of the 21st, discharges of cannon and the beating of drums announced the commencement of the festival. The Prince, as is customary, held a grand audience, at which all the khans, moollahs, meerzas, and merchants were present, to pay their respects and wish him a fortunate new year.

Having intimated to the Beglerbeg of Tabreez, Mehmet Khan, our desire to see the ceremony without attracting the attention of the Prince, he procured us places in a small upper room adjoining the Audience Hall, which looked down on the court below. A regiment of soldiers, and a tolerable band, composed chiefly of Russian deserters, were present; and the whole assembly was ranged in order, according to their respective ranks, and dressed in their gayest apparel. As soon as the Prince was seated, the chief poet stepped forward and recited some verses, expressive of the prosperity of the province under his government, and complimenting him in every possible way. The Prince intimated his admiration and approval of the composition, and, ordering the speaker to approach, filled his hands with small silver coins made for the occasion. Most of the principal people then paid their respects, one after another, and received the same mark of favour.

As this ceremony would last several hours, and we had to prepare to make our own visit, we departed, and waited till about three o'clock in the afternoon, when it was announced that the Prince was ready to receive us. He was seated in state in a large arm-chair, and was most richly clothed in shawls and jewels. On his arms he wore bazubunds, or armlets, set with magnificent emeralds; and at his waist a splendidly jewelled khaujar, or carved dagger, from which hung a tassel of fine pearls. The visit was very ceremonious, and lasted only a few minutes. Some compliments were exchanged; and Bahman Meerza, while hoping that the existing friendship between England and Persia might never be interrupted, turned to the Consul-General, and remarked, that the former power had shown its great wisdom in appointing at Tabreez such a talented and fit person as himself. As his Highness appeared much fatigued with his exertions, we soon took our leave.

The next six days were occupied in receiving and paying visits; which latter ceremony was rendered particularly unpleasant by the inclemency of the weather.

On the 13th of April a gholaum arrived from Tehraun on his way to Erzeroom, and, having seen all that was worth seeing, and wishing soon to reach the latter place, I determined to accompany him; and, bidding adieu to my kind friends, quitted Persia, thinking it a very pleasant and interesting country for a six months' tour, but by no means sufficiently agreeable for me to adopt it for a prolonged

residence. I reached Erzeroom in safety, offering up my heartfelt thanks to a gracious Providence for his never-failing care and protection throughout a journey in which I encountered much inconvenience, and occasionally some danger.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

CALCULATION OF THE PROBABLE ANNUAL PRODUCE AND GROSS VALUE OF THE STURGEON FISHERY AT THE MOUTH OF THE SEFEED-ROOD.

With regard to the total annual produce of this fishery, the number of fish taken, which is stated at 125,000, I consider to be tolerably correct, at least as far as can be expected where no accounts are kept; for, making a rough calculation on what we were informed were the average numbers taken daily at different times of the season, it comes out thus:—

					Mean.		Days.		Fish.
Feb.	from 100	to 800	per day		400	for	28	.	11,200
March	„ 800	„ 2000	„		1400	„	31	. .	43,400
April	„ 3500	„ 3800	„		3650	„	15	.	54,750
Remainder of the year	4	„ 8	„		6	„	291 =	1746	
				Deduct consumed by fishermen				746	1,000
									110,350

giving a difference of 15,000, according as the season may be good or bad.

Again: we were told that seven or eight ships were loaded annually: that one of these had three masts, and carried about forty thousand fish, besides twenty or thirty barrels of caviare; but that the rest were smaller, with two masts, and took only about twelve thousand a-piece: thus:—

		Fish.
1	vessel carries	40,000
7	vessels 12,000 each	84,000
8		124,000

which gives, as nearly as possible, the original number; and, supposing that sometimes there were only six of the smaller vessels, it would come to something less than two thousand of the above calculation of 110,350.

"It is impossible to say what may be the value of this fishery to the lessee, as I am totally ignorant of the expenses incurred: an approximate guess may, however, be formed of its gross amount.

There is difficulty in ascertaining the value of the salt fish, as they are sold by weight, and no accounts of it are kept. Roughly calculating, however, by the burden of the vessels employed, it may be something near the following.

	Tons.	Poots.
7 ships of 3,000 poots	(50)	= 21,000
1 ship 10,000 „	(166)	= 10,000
		31,000

	Poots.		Tns.
Taking the average price:	31,000	@ 4 kns. =	12,400
The value of the caviare may be more correctly ascertained: the annual quantity is from 300 to 350 casks, say 325 casks, @ 40 poots =	13,000	@ 2 tns. =	26,000
The isinglass is	250	@ 32 =	8,000
Total gross value of the produce of the fishery for one year, before the expenses are deducted.			46,400
			£ 23,200

In English weight* the quantity amounts to

	lbs.			s.	d.	
Fish	1,108,250	and sells at	Astrachan for		1¼	per lb.
Caviare	464,750	„	„		6½	„
Isinglass	8,937	„	„	8	11	„

* The Russian Poot or Pood is calculated at 35¾ lbs. English.

(B.)

DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE REVENUE OF THE TOWN OF BORFROOSH.

	Tns.
Idjarrah-i-Durrogha, or Rent of the Office of Chief of Police	400
Taxes on the shops of makers of the iron heels of slippers	160
„ Butchers' shops	350
„ Shops of poultry, fish, etc.	70
„ Corn-dealers	60
„ Bakers	100
„ A small trade carried on by Jews, of whom there are sixty or seventy families	110
Irregular taxes on various shops, as of grocers, sellers of cotton manufactures, shoemakers, saddlers, and others, levied according to the state of the trade or the wealth of the proprietor	485
	1,735

(C.)

NAMES OF THE DIFFERENT TRIBES OF WHICH BRANCHES HAVE SETTLED IN MAUZUNDEROON.

Gerailee, Osanloo, Kellidgelee, Imraunloo	originally from Toorkestaun, Khorassaun, and Azerbijan.	Live near Nica: under their chiefs Seffee Kooly Khan and Ali Khan. The three latter live in or around Saree.
Modaunloo, Iaumbegloo	Koords	Inhabiting Saree and the following villages in its vicinity:

Near Saree.
Mooshabad
Roodpesht
Loreem
Footerm
Koord-i-Koolla
Issi Kundook.

Nearer Ferrahad.
Pembeh Choolla
Isfundeen
Hemeedabad
Zeid
Aumil
Aukhun

Khodjavend, from Ardelan and Loristan		Dwelling in Tennacorben, Kellauristauk and Coojoor.
Abdul malekee	„ near Shirauz	

Belooche	from Beloochistan; dwelling in Saree.
Talish	now only about two hundred men; dwelling near Ashreff under their chief Khan, Baba Khan.
Affghaun	brought originally from near Caubul by Nadir Shah: they now occupy the villages of Karatuppeh and Nodehhak, and some few reside at Saree.

Of these the Modaunloo is the largest, and contributes 1000 horse. The Khodjavend and Abdul malekee are the next in consequence. All the foreign tribes are exempt from taxation in consideration of military service.

(D.)

DIVISIONS OF THE KUDJAR TRIBE.

YOKARIBASH.	ASHAGABASH.
Devenloo	Kavanloo
Khazinehdonloo	Asdinloo
Seponloo	Ziaudloo
Kerloo	Shaumbeyautloo
Koohnaloo	Tashloo
Kaiyahloo.	Caramansanloo.

(E.)

ROADS FROM ASTRABAD TO TEHRAUN.

POST STATIONS ON THE CHUPPAR ROAD.

			Fursucks.
From Astrabad to		Koord muhuleh.	4
,,	,,	Chuppar Kendeh	4
,,	,,	Ashreff	7
,,	,,	Saree	8
,,	,,	Shirghior	7
,,	,,	Zeeraub	4
,,	,,	Surkurabad	5
,,	,,	Feroozkoo	4
,,	,,	Serbandon	5
,,	,,	Asellek	10
,,	,,	Tehraun	4
			62
		Or miles	248

Tolerable horses are to be had all the way, but it generally takes five days to accomplish the journey, as it is impossible to travel at night through the jungle.

The roads generally adopted by caravans are as follows:

THE MEGASSEE ROAD.

	Fursucks.
To Miaunderreh	4
„ Megassee	3½
„ Chehardeh	5
„ Ayanoo	3
„ Toodervah	7½
„ Auhoowan	5
„ Semnoon	6
„ Lasghird	6½
„ Dehnummuck	6½
„ Kishlaugh	6
„ Eywanekaif	5
„ Kabout Goombuz	6
„ Tehraun	6
	70
Or miles	280

THE SANDOOK ROAD.

	Fursucks.
To Seid Meiran	1
„ Jehan Nemor	5
„ Chehardeh	5

The remainder as the Megassee road.

If wishing to go to Damghaun by either of these two roads, turn off at Chehardeh

	Fursucks.
To Damghaun	5
„ Koosha	6
„ Ayanoo	7

And the rest as the road by Megassee.

THE KOUSLOOK ROAD.

	Fursucks.
To Kouslook	5
„ Shahkoo	3
„ Tash	3
„ Bostam	5
„ Dehmollah	7
„ Mehmandoost	6
„ Damghaun	3
„ Koosha	6
„ Ayanoo	7

And the rest as the Megassee road.

The Megassee road is said to be the best, and was the road we adopted in going to Tehraun. In giving the different stations on the caravan roads, I have mentioned those generally adopted by muleteers; but, as each has his favourite halting-place, very often in describing the same road two muleteers will mention nearly all the stations differently.

(F.)

POST ROADS IN PERSIA.

FROM TEHRAUN TO RESHT.

	Fursucks.
To Keredge	6
„ Sefer Khodjeh	9
„ Casveen	7
„ Kharsan	8
„ Menzil	6
„ Imaumzadeh Haushim	7
„ Resht	9
	52
Or miles	208

The horses from Casveen to Resht are generally pretty good.

The wages of each chuppargee, or postmaster, from Casveen to Resht is 120 tomauns per annum. In going to Resht from Tabreez, the road is that to Tehraun as far as Casveen, and then as above noted.

POST STATIONS FROM TEHRAUN TO TABREEZ.

	Fursucks.
Keredge	6
Sefer Khodjeh	9
Casveen	7
Siah Dahen	5
Khorrumderreh	8
Sultanieh	6
Zenjon	6
Baugh	6
Aukend	6
Miauneh	6
Turcoman-chai	6
Tickmetash	7
Seidabad	6
Tabreez	4
	88
Or miles	352

The horses are in general very bad as far as Miauneh, after which they become better.

Each chuppargee along this road receives, or ought to receive, 200 tomauns salary, together with 30 khalwars of straw, 15 khalwars of barley, and 10 of wheat annually.

POST STATIONS FROM TABREEZ TO ERZEROOM.

Persia.*	Fursucks.		Miles.
Chebister . .	8	@ 4 miles	32
Tasuche . . .	6	„ „	24
Khoi . . .	8	„ „	32
Zorawabad . .	8	„ „	32
Kara-aineh . .	6	„ „	24
Awajik . . .	6	„ „	24
Turkey.†	**Hours.**		
Diadin . . .	12	@ 3 miles	36
Kara klissiah . .	12	„ „	36
Mollah Suleiman .	7	„ „	21
Khorassaun . .	15	„ „	45
Hassan Kaleh . .	8	„ „	24
Erzeroom . .	6	„ „	18
			348

In Persia the chuppar khonehs are Government property, and an order for horses is all that is required.

In summer and autumn this journey can be accomplished in four days. In winter and spring five or six days, sometimes eight or ten, are necessary.

* From Chebister to Awajik horses in general good.

† From Diadin to Mollah Suleiman horses very bad. From Khorassaun to Erzeroom horses very good.

POST STATIONS FROM TEHRAUN TO SHIRAUZ.

		Fursucks.
Kennarghird	(village)	6
Sadrawbad	(caravanserai)	10
Koom	(city)	6
Porsangoom	(caravanserai)	4
Sensen	„	8
Cashan	(city)	6
Kohrood	(village)	8
Soh	„	6
Moorchehar	„	6
Isphahaun	(city)	9
Meyhiar	(caravanserai)	8
Goomishehr	(city)	5
Maksood Beg	(village)	4
Yezdikhaust	„	6
Deh Ghirdoo	(caravanserai)	8
Khoshkisir	„	6
Rezaabad	(village)	8
Moyin	„	6
Fathabad	„	6
Shirauz	(city)	9
		135
	Miles	540

The above is the summer road; the winter road branches off from Yezdikhaust, 92 fursucks from Tehraun.

	Fursucks.
From Tehraun	92
To Shooligistaun	6
„ Surmeh	8
„ Deh-hibid	10
„ Meshed-i-Moorghaut	6
„ Seidon	8
„ Shirauz	10
	140
Miles	560

The horses on this road are generally bad. From two to five are kept at each station.

POST STATIONS FROM TEHRAUN TO MESHED.*

	Fursucks.
Kabout-i-Goombuz	6
Eywanikaif	6
Kishlaugh	5
Dehnummuck	6
Lasghird	6½
Semnoon	6½
Aughoorran	6
Koosha	6
Damghaun	6
Dehmollah	6
Shahrood	6
Meyaumeh	14
Miaundesht	6

* At each chuppar khoneh there are between two and four horses. They are in general miserable animals.

	Fursucks.
Abbasabad	6
Mesinoon*	7
Mehr	5
Subziwar	8
Zehrferhaunee	6
Nishabood	8
Kadamghaun	6
Sheriffabad	6
Meshed	6
	144
	Miles 576

POST STATIONS FROM TEHRAUN TO KIRMAUN.†

	Fursucks.
To Kennarghird	6
„ Sadrawbad	10
„ Koom	6
„ Porsangoom	4
„ Sensen	8
„ Cashan	6
„ Boozabad	5
„ Bawd	5
„ Maäbad	6
„ Moghoreh	5
„ Caravanserai Natenz	5
„ Ardestaun	3
„ Nehistaun	7
„ Noïn	5
„ Nogoombud	6

* From Mesinoon there are five or six horses at each station, usually serviceable beasts.

† From three to four horses at each station. After Cashan usually very bad. The pay of each chuppargee on this road is between 100 and 120 tomauns per annum.

	Fursucks.
To Agdor	9
„ Meybid	8
„ Yezd	9
„ Sir-yezd	10
„ Zein-udeen	6
„ Kirmanshaw	5
„ Shems	6
„ Anor	7
„ Beyauz	5
„ Keshkoo	6
„ Rustamabad	5
„ Kabouter Khan	6
„ Abdoolabad	5
„ Robad	6
„ Baughain	4
„ Kirmaun	7
	191
Miles	746

THE END.

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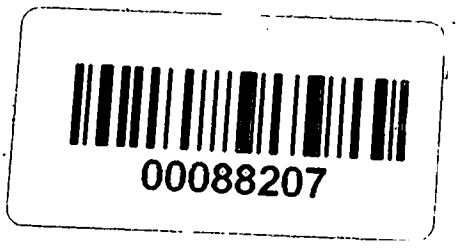
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